OEDIPUS:

A

TRAGEDY.

As it is ACTED at His

Royal Highneſs

THE

DUKE's Theatre.

The AUTHORS
Mr. *DRYDEN*, and Mr. *LEE*.

The Second Edition.

Hi proprium decus & partum indignantur honorem
Ni teneant.——— Virgil.
Vos exemplaria Græca,
Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna. Horat.

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IN

DUKE'S Alley.

PREFACE.

THOUGH it be dangerous to raise too great an expectation, especially in works of this Nature, where we are to please an unsatiable Audience, yet 'tis reasonable to prepossess them in favour of an Author, and therefore both the Prologue and Epilogue inform'd you, that Oedipus was the most celebrated piece of all Antiquity. That Sophocles, not only the Greatest Wit, but one of the greatest Men in Athens, made it for the Stage at the Publick Cost, and that it had the reputation of being his Master-piece, not only amongst the Seven of his which are still remaining, but of the greater Number which are perish'd. Aristotle has more than once admir'd it in his Book of Poetry, Horace has mention'd it: Lucullus, Julius Cæsar, and other noble Romans, have written on the same Subject, though their Poems are wholly lost; but Seneca's is still preserv'd. In our own Age, Corneille has attempted it, and it appears by his Preface, with great success: But a judicious Reader will easily observe, how much the Copy is inferiour to the Original. He tells you himself, that he owes a great part of his success to the happy Episode of Theseus and Dirce; which is the same thing, as if we should acknowledge, that we were indebted for our good fortune, to the underplot of Adrastus, Eurydice, and Creon. The truth is, he miserably fail'd in the Character of his Hero: if he desir'd that Oedipus should be pitied, he shou'd have made him a better man. He forgot that Sophocles had taken care to shew him in his first entrance, a just, a merciful, a successful, a Religious Prince, and in short, a Father of his Country: instead of these he has drawn him suspicious, designing, more anxious of keeping the Theban Crown, than solicitous for the safety of his People: Hector'd by Theseus, contemn'd by Dirce, and scarce maintaining a second part in his own Tragedie. This was an errour in the first Concoction; and therefore never to be mended in the second or the third: He introduc'd a greater Hero than Oedipus himself: for when Theseus was once there, that Companion of Hercules

cules *must yield to none : The Poet was oblig'd to furnish him with business, to make him an Equipage suitable to his dignity, and by following him too close, to lose his other King of* Branford *in the Crowd.* Seneca *on the other side, as if there were no such thing as Nature to be minded in a Play, is always running after pompous expression, pointed sentences, and Philosophical notions, more proper for the Study than the Stage : The* French-man *follow'd a wrong scent ; and the* Roman *was absolutely at cold Hunting. All we cou'd gather out of* Corneille, *was, that an Episode must be, but not his way : and* Seneca *supply'd us with no new hint, but only a Relation which he makes of his* Tiresias *raising the Ghost of* Lajus : *which is here perform'd in view of the Audience, the Rites and Ceremonies so far his, as he agreed with Antiquity, and the Religion of the* Greeks : *but he himself was beholding to* Homer's Tiresias *in the* Odysses *for some of them : and the rest have been collected from* Heliodore's Ethiopiques, *and* Lucan's Erictho. Sophocles *indeed is admirable every where : And therefore we have follow'd him as close as possibly we cou'd : But the* Athenian *Theater, (whether more perfect than ours is not now disputed) had a perfection differing from ours. You see there in every Act a single Scene, (or two at most) which manage the business of the Play, and after that succeeds the* Chorus, *which commonly takes up more time in Singing, than there has been employ'd in speaking. The principal person appears almost constantly through the Play ; but the inferiour parts seldome above once in the whole Tragedie. The Conduct of our Stage is much more difficult, where we are oblig'd never to lose any considerable character which we have once presented. Custom likewise has obtain'd, that we must form an under-plot of second persons, which must be depending on the first, and their by-walks must be like those in a Labyrinth, which all of 'em lead into the great Parterre : or like so many several lodging Chambers, which have their out-lets into the same Gallery. Perhaps after all, if we could think so, the ancient method, as 'tis the easiest, is also the most Natural, and the best. For variety, as 'tis manag'd, is too often subject to breed distraction : and while we would please too many ways, for want of art in the conduct, we please in none. But we have given you more already than was necessary for a Preface, and for ought we know, may gain no more by our instructions, than that politick Nation is like to do, who have taught their Enemies to fight so long, that at last they are in a condition to invade them.*

Dramatis

Dramatis Perſonæ.

Oedipus	Mr. *Betterton.*
Adraſtus	Mr. *Smith.*
Creon	Mr. *Samford.*
Tireſias	Mr. *Harris.*
Hæmon	Mr. *Crosby.*
Alcander	Mr. *Williams.*
Diocles	Mr. *Norris.*
Pyracmon	Mr. *Boman.*
Phorbas	Mr. *Gillo.*
Dymas	
Ægeon	
Ghoſt of Lajus	Mr. *Williams.*

WOMEN.

Jocaſta	*Mrs. Betterton.*
Eurydice	*Mrs. Lee.*
Manto.	*Mrs. Evans.*

Prieſts, Citizens, Attendants, *&c.*

SCENE, *THEBES.*

PROLOGUE.

WHEN Athens *all the* Grecian *State did guide,*
And Greece *gave Laws to all the World beside,*
Then Sophocles *with* Socrates *did sit,*
Supreme in Wisdom one, and one in Wit:
And Wit from Wisdom differ'd not in those,
But as 'twas Sung in Verse, or said in Prose.
Then, Oedipus, *on Crowded Theaters,*
Drew all admiring Eyes and listning Ears;
The pleas'd Spectator shouted every Line,
The Noblest, manliest, and the Best Design!
And every Critick of each learned Age
By this just Model has reform'd the Stage.
Now, should it fail, (as Heav'n avert our fear!)
Damn it in silence, lest the World should hear.
For were it known this Poem did not please,
You might set up for perfect Salvages:
Your Neighbours would not look on you as men:
But think the Nation all turn'd Picts *agen.*
Faith, as you mannage matters, 'tis not fit
You should suspect your selves of too much Wit.
Drive not the jeast too far, but spare this Piece;
And, for this once, be not more Wise than Greece.
See twice! Do not pell-mell to Damning fall,
Like true born Brittains, *who ne're think at all:*
Pray be advis'd; and though at Mons *you won,*
On pointed Cannon do not always run.
With some respect to antient Wit proceed;
You take the four first Councils for your Creed.
But when you lay Tradition wholly by,
And on the private Spirit alone relye,
You turn Fanaticks in your Poetry.
If notwithstanding all that we can say,
You needs will have your pen'worths of the Play:
And come resolv'd to Damn, because you pay,
Record it, in memorial of the Fact,
The first Play bury'd since the Woollen Act.

OEDIPUS.

OEDIPUS

ACT. I. SCENE *Thebes.*

The Curtain rises to a plaintive Tune, representing the present condition of Thebes; *Dead Bodies appear at a distance in the Streets; Some faintly go over the Stage, others drop.*

Enter Alcander, Diocles, Pyracmon.

Alc. Methinks we stand on Ruines; Nature shakes
About us; and the Universal Frame
So loose, that it but wants another push
To leap from off its Hinges.

Dioc. No Sun to chear us; but a Bloody Globe
That rowls above; a bald and Beamless Fire;
His Face o're-grown with Scurf: the Sun's sick too;
Shortly he'll be an Earth.

Pyr. Therefore the Seasons
Lye all confus'd; and, by the Heaven's neglected,
Forget themselves: Blind Winter meets the Summer
In his Mid-way, and, seeing not his Livery,
Has driv'n him headlong back: And the raw damps
With flaggy Wings fly heavily about,
Scattering their Pestilential Colds and Rhumes
Through all the lazy Air.

Alc. Hence Murrains follow,
On bleating Flocks, and on the lowing Herds:
At last, the Malady
Grew more domestick, and the faithful Dog
Dy'd at his Masters Feet.

Dioc. And next his Master:
For all those Plagues which Earth and Air had brooded,
First on inferiour Creatures try'd their force;
And last they seiz'd on man.

Pyr. And then a thousand deaths at once advanc'd,

And every Dart took place; all was so sudden,
That scarce a first man fell; one but began
To wonder, and straight fell a wonder too;
A third, who stoop'd to raise his dying Friend,
Dropt in the pious Act. Heard you that groan?

Groan within.

Dioc. A Troop of Ghosts took flight together there:
Now Death's grown riotous, and will play no more
~~For single Stakes, but Families and Tribes:~~
How are we sure we breathe not now our last,
And that next minute,
Our Bodies cast into some common Pit,
Shall not be built upon, and overlaid
By half a people?

Alc. There's a Chain of Causes
Link'd to Effects; invincible Necessity
That what e're is, could not but so have been;
That's my security.

To them, Enter Creon.

Creon. So had it need, when all our Streets lye cover'd
With dead and dying men;
And Earth exposes Bodies on the Pavements
More than she hides in Graves!
Betwixt the Bride and Bridegroom have I seen
The Nuptial Torch do common offices
Of Marriage and of Death.

Dioc. Now, *Oedipus*,
(If he return from War, our other Plague)
Will scarce find half he left, to grace his Triumphs.

Pyr. A feeble Pæan will be sung before him.

Alc. He would do well to bring the Wives and Children
Of Conquer'd *Argians*, to renew his *Thebes*.

Creon. May Funerals meet him at the City Gates
With their detested Omen.

Dioc. Of his Children.

Creon. Nay, though she be my Sister, of his Wife.

Alc. Oh that our *Thebes* might once again behold
A Monarch *Theban* born!

Dioc. We might have had one.

Pyr. Yes, had the people Pleas'd.

Creon. Come, y'are my Friends:
The Queen My Sister, after *Lajus*'s death,
Feard to lye single; and supply'd his place
With a young Successour.

Dioc.

Dioc. He much resembles
Her former Husband too.

Alc. I always thought so.

Pyr. When twenty Winters more have grizzl'd his black Locks
He will be very *Lajus*.

Creon. So he will:
Mean time she stands provided of a *Lajus*
More young and vigorous too, by twenty Springs.
These Women are such cunning Purveyors!
Mark where their Appetites have once been pleas'd,
The Same resemblance in a younger Lover
Lyes brooding in their Fancies the same Pleasures,
And urges their remembrance to desire.

Dioc. Had merit, not her dotage, been consider'd,
Then *Creon* had been King; but *Oedipus*,
A stranger!

Creon. That word stranger, I confess
Sounds harshly in my Ears.

Dioc. We are your Creatures.
The people prone, as in all general ills,
To sudden change; the King in Wars abroad,
The Queen a Woman, weak and unregarded;
Eurydice the Daughter of dead *Lajus*,
A Princess young and beautious, and unmarried.
Methinks from these disjoynted Propositions
Something might be produc'd.

Creon. The Gods have done
Their part, by sending this commodious Plague.
But oh the Princess! her hard heart is shut
By Adamantine Locks against my Love.

Alc. Your claim to her is strong: you are betroth'd.

Pyr. True; in her Nonage.

Alc. But that let's remov'd.

Dioc. I heard the Prince of *Argos*, young *Adraſtus*,
When he was hostage here ——

Creon. Oh name him not! the bane of all my hopes;
That hot-bran'd, head-long Warriour, has the Charmes
Of youth, and somewhat of a Lucky rashness,
To please a Woman yet more Fool than he.
That thoughtless Sex is caught by outward form
And empty noise, and loves it self in man.

Alc. But since the War broke out about our Frontiers,
He's now a Foe to *Thebes*.

Creon. But is not so to her; see, she appears;
Once more I'll prove my Fortune: you insinuate

Kind thoughts of me into the multitude;
Lay load upon the Court; gull 'em with freedom;
And you shall see 'em toss their Tails, and gad,
As if the Breeze had stung 'em.

Dioc. We'll about it. [*Exeunt* Alcander, Diocles, Pyracmon.

Enter Eurydice.

Creon. Hail, Royal Maid; thou bright *Eurydice*!
A lavish Planet reign'd when thou wert born;
And made thee of such kindred-mold to Heaven,
Thou seem'st more Heavens then ours.

Euryd. Cast round your Eyes;
Where late the Streets were so thick sown with men,
Like *Cadmus* Brood they justled for the passage:
Now look for those erected heads, and see 'em
Like Pebbles paving all our publick wayes:
When you have thought on this, then answer me,
If these be hours of Courtship.

Creon. Yes, they are;
For when the Gods destroy so fast, 'tis time
We should renew the Race.

Euryd. What, in the midst of horrour!

Creon. Why not then?
There's the more need of comfort.

Euryd. Impious *Creon*!

Creon. Unjust *Eurydice*! can you accuse me
Of love, which is Heaven's precept, and not fear
That Vengeance, which you say pursues our Crimes,
Should reach your Perjuries?

Euryd. Still th' old Argument.
I bad you cast your eyes on other men,
Now cast 'em on your self: think what you are.

Creon. A Man.

Euryd. A Man!

Creon Why doubt you? I'm a man.

Euryd. 'Tis well you tell me so, I should mistake you
For any other part o'th' whole Creation,
Rather than think you Man: hence from my sight,
Thou poyson to my eyes.

Creon. 'Twas you first poison'd mine; and yet methinks,
My face and person shou'd not make you sport.

Euryd. You force me, by your importunities,
To shew you what you are.

Creon. A Prince, who loves you:

And

And since yourpride provokes me, worth your love,
Ev'n at his highest value.
Euryd. Love from thee!
Why love renounc'd thee e're thou saw'st the light:
Nature her self start back when thou wert born,
And cry'd the work's not mine———
The Midwife stood agast; and when she saw
ThyMountain back, and thy distorted legs,
Thy face it self,
Half-minted with the Royal stamp of man,
And half o're-come with beast, stood doubting long,
Whose right in thee were more:
And knew not, if to burn thee in the flames,
Were not the holier work.
Creon. Am *I* to blame if Nature threw my body
In so perverse a mold? yet when she cast
Her envious hand upon my supple joints,
Unable to resist, and rumpled e'm
On heaps in their dark lodging, to revenge
Her bungled work, she stampt my mind more fair:
And as from Chaos, huddled and deform'd,
The Gods struck fire, and lighted up the lamps
That beautifie the skye, so she inform'd
This ill-shap'd body with a daring Soul:
And making less than man, she made me more.
Euryd. No, thou art all one errour; soul and body
The first young tryal of some unskill'd Pow'r,
Rude in the making Art, and Ape of *Jove*.
Thy crooked mind within, hunch'd out thy back,
And wander'd in thy limbs: to thy own kind
Make love, if thou canst find it in the world:
And seek not from our Sex to raise an off-spring,
Which, mingled with the rest, would tempt the Gods
To cut off human Kind.
Creon. No; let 'em leave
The *Argian* Prince for you: that Enemy
Of *Thebes* has made you false, and break the Vows
You made to me.
Euryd. They were my Mothers Vows,
Made when I was at Nurse.
Creon. But hear me Maid;
This blot of Nature, this deform'd loath'd *Creon*,
Is Master of a Sword, to reach the blood
Of your young *Minion*, spoil the Gods fine work,
And stab you in his heart.

Euryd. This when thou doſt,
Then mayſt thou ſtill be curs'd with Loving me:
And, as thou art, be ſtill unpitied, loath'd;
And let his Ghoſt——No, let his Ghoſt have reſt;
But let the greateſt, fierceſt, fouleſt Fury,
Let *Creon* haunt himſelf. [*Exit* Euridice.

Creon. 'Tis true, I am
What ſhe has told me, an offence to ſight:
My body opens inward to my ſoul,
And lets in day to make my Vices ſeen
By all diſcerning eyes, but the blind vulgar.
I muſt haſte er'e *Oedipus* return,
To ſnatch the Crown and her; for I ſtill love;
But love with malice; as an angry Cur
Snarles while he feeds, ſo will I ſeize and ſtanch
The hunger of my love on this proud beauty,
And leave the ſcraps for Slaves.

Enter Tireſias, *leaning on a ſtaff, and led by his Daughter* Manto.

What makes this blind prophetick Fool abroad?
Wou'd his *Apollo* had him, he's too holy
For Earth and me; I'll ſhun his walk; and ſeek
My popular friends. [*Exit* Creon.

Tireſias. A little farther; yet a little farther,
Thou wretched Daughter of a dark old man,
Conduct my weary ſteps; and thou who feelſt
For me and for thy ſelf, beware thou tread not
With impious ſteps upon dead corps;——Now ſtay:
Methinks I draw more open, vital air,
Where are we?

Manto. Under Covert of a wall:
The moſt frequented once, and noiſy part
Of *Thebes*, now midnight ſilence reigns ev'n here;
And graſs untrodden ſprings beneath our feet.

Tir. If there be nigh this place a Sunny bank,
There let me reſt a while: a Sunny bank!
Alas how can it be, where no Sun ſhines!
But a dim winking Taper in the Skyes,
That nods, and ſcarce holds up his dowzy head
To glimmer through the damps.

[*A Noice within, follow, follow, follow, A* Creon, *A* Creon, *A* Creon.]

Hark! a tumultuous noiſe, and *Creon*'s name
Thrice eccho'd.

Man.

Man. Fly, the tempeſt drives this way.

Tir. Whither can Age and Blindneſs take their flight?
If I could fly, what cou'd I ſuffer worſe,
Secure of greater Ills! [*Noiſe again*, Creon, Creon, Creon.

Enter Creon, Diocles, Alcander, Pyracmon: *followed by the Crowd.*

Creon. I thank ye, Countrymen; but muſt refuſe
The honours you intend me, they're too great;
And I am too unworthy; think agen,
And make a better choice.

1 *Cit.* Think twice! I ne're thought twice in all my life:
That's double Work.

2 *Cit.* My firſt word is always my ſecond; and therefore I'll have
No ſecond word: and therefore once again *I* ſay, A *Creon.*

All. A *Creon*, A *Creon*, A *Creon.*

Creon. Yet hear me, Fellow Citizens.

Dioc. Fellow Citizens! there was a word of kindneſs.

Alc. When did *Oedipus* ſalute you by that familiar name?

1 *Cit.* Never, never; he was too proud.

Creon. Indeed he could not, for he was a ſtranger:
But under him our *Thebes* is half deſtroyed.
Forbid it Heav'n the reſidue ſhould periſh
Under a *Theban* born.
'Tis true, the Gods might ſend this Plague among you,
Becauſe a ſtranger rul'd: but what of that,
Can I redreſs it now?

3 *Cit.* Yes, you or none.
'Tis Certain that the Gods are angry with us
Becauſe he reigns.

Creon. Oedipus may return: you may be ruin'd.

1 *Cit.* Nay, if that be the matter, we are ruin'd already.

2 *Cit.* Half of us that are here preſent, were living men but
Yeſterday, and we that are abſent do but drop and drop,
And no man knows whether he be dead or living. And
Therefore while we are ſound and well, let us ſatisfie our
Conſciences, and make a new King.

3 *Cit.* Ha, if we were but worthy to ſee another Coronation,
And then if we muſt dye, we'll go merrily together.

All. To the queſtion, to the queſtion.

Dioc. Are you content, *Creon* ſhould be your King?

All. A *Creon*, A *Creon*, A *Creon.*

Tir. Hear me, ye *Thebans*, and thou *Creon*, hear me.

1 *Cit.* Who's that would be heard; we'll hear no man:
We can ſcarce hear one another.

Tir.

Tir. I charge you by the Gods to hear me.

2 *Cit.* Oh, 'tis *Appollo*'s Prieſt, we muſt hear him; 'tis the old blind Prophet that ſees all things.

3 *Cit.* He comes from the Gods too, and they are our betters; And therefore in good manners we muſt hear him: Speak, Prophet.

2 *Cit.* For comming from the Gods, that's no great matter, They can all ſay that; but he's a great Schollar, he can make Almanacks, and he were put to't, and therefore I ſay hear him.

Tir. When angry Heav'n ſcatters its plagues among you, *Is* it for nought, ye *Thebans!* are the Gods Unjuſt in puniſhing? are there no Crimes VVhich pull this Vengeance down?

1 *Cit.* Yes, yes, no doubt there are ſome Sins ſtirring That are the cauſe of all.

3 *Cit.* Yes there are Sins; or we ſhould have no Taxes.

2 *Cit.* For my part *I* can ſpeak it with a ſafe Conſcience, I ne're ſinn'd in all my life.

1 *Cit.* Nor I.

3 *Cit.* Nor *I.*

2 *Cit.* Then we are all juſtified, the ſin lyes not at our doors.

Tir. All juſtified alike, and yet all guilty; Were every Mans falſe dealing brought to light, His Envy, Malice, Lying, Perjuries, His VVeights and Meaſures, th' other mans Extortions, With that Face could you tell offended Heav'n You had not ſinn'd?

2 *Cit.* Nay, if theſe be ſins, the caſe is alter'd; for my part I never Thought any thing but Murder had been a ſin.

Tir. And yet, as if all theſe were leſs than nothing, You add Rebellion to 'em; impious *Thebans!* Have you not ſworn before the Gods to ſerve And to obey this *Oedipus*, your King *By* publick voice elected? anſwer me, If this be true!

2 *Cit.* This is true; but it's a hard VVorld Neighbours, If a mans Oath muſt be his maſter.

Creon. Speak *Diocles*; all goes wrong.

Doic. How are you Traytors, Countrymen of *Thebes*? This holy Sir, who preſſes you with Oaths, Forgets your firſt; were you not ſworn before To *Lajus* and his Blood?

All. VVe were; we were.

Dioc. VVhile *Lajus* has a lawful Succeſſor, Your firſt Oath ſtill muſt bind: *Eurydice* Is Heir to *Lajus*; let her marry *Creon:*

Offended

Offended Heav'n will never be appeas'd
While *Oedipus* pollutes the Throne of *Lajus*,
A ſtranger to his Blood.

All. We'll no *Oedipus*, no *Oedipus*.

1 *Cit.* He puts the Prophet in a Mouſe-hole.

2 *Cit.* *I* knew it wou'd be ſo; the laſt man ever ſpeaks the beſt reaſon.

Tir. Can benefits thus dye, ungrateful *Thebans!*
Remember yet, when, after *Lajus*'s death,
The Monſter *Sphynx* laid your rich Country waſte,
Your Vinyards ſpoil'd, your labouring Oxen ſlew;
Your ſelves for fear mew'd up within your Walls.
She, taller then your Gates, o're-look'd your Town,
But when ſhe rais'd her Bulk to ſail above you,
She drove the Air arround her like a Whirlwind,
And ſhaded all beneath; till ſtooping down,
She clapp'd her leathern wing againſt your Tow'rs,
And thruſt out her long neck, ev'n to your doors.

Dioc. Alc. Pyr. We'll hear no more.

Tir. You durſt not meet in Temples
T'invoke the Gods for aid, the proudeſt he
Who leads you now, then crow'd, like a dar'd Lark:
This *Creon* ſhook for fear,
The blood of *Lajus* cruddled in his Veins:
Till *Oedipus* arriv'd,
Call'd by his own high courage and the Gods,
Himſelf to you a God: ye offer'd him
Your Queen, and Crown; (but what was then your Crown!)
And Heav'n authoriz'd it by his ſucceſs:
Speak then, who is your lawfull King?

All. 'Tis *Oedipus*.

Tir. 'Tis *Oedipus* indeed; your King more lawfull
Than yet you dream: for ſomething ſtill there lyes
In Heav'ns dark Volume, which I read through miſts:
'Tis great, prodigious; 'tis a dreadful birth,
Of wondrous Fate; and now, juſt now diſcloſing.
I ſee, I ſee! how terribly it dawns.
And my Soul ſickens with it:

1 *Cit.* How the God ſhakes him!

Tir. He comes! he comes! Victory! Conqueſt! Triumph!
But oh! Guiltleſs and Guilty: Murder! Parricide!
Inceſt; Diſcovery! Puniſhment ——'tis ended,
And all your ſufferings o're.

A Trumpet within; *Enter* Hæmon.

Hem. Rouze up ye *Thebans*; tune your *Io Paans*!
Your King returns; the *Argians* are o'ercome;
Their Warlike Prince in single Combat taken,
And led in Bands by God-like *Oedipus*.

All. Oedipus, Oedipus, Oedipus!

Creon. Furies confound his Fortune! —— [*Aside.*
Haste, all haste; [*To them.*
And meet with Blessings our Victorious King;
Decree Processions; bid new Holy-Days;
Crown all the Statues of our Gods with Garlands;
And Raise a Brazen Collumn, thus inscrib'd,
To *Oedipus*, now twice a Conquerour; Deliverer of his *Thebes*.
Trust me, I weep for joy to see this day.

Tir. Yes, Heaven knows why thou weep'st: —go, Countrymen,
And, as you us'd to supplicate your Gods——
So meet your King, with Bayes, and Olive-branches:
Bow down, and touch his Knees, and beg from him
An end of all your Woes; for only he
Can give it you. [*Ex.* Tiresias, *the People following.*

Enter Oedipus *in Triumph*; Adrastus *Prisoner*; Dymas, *Train.*

Creon. All hail, great *Oedipus*;
Thou mighty Conquerour, hail; welcome to *Thebes*:
To thy own *Thebes*; to all that's left of *Thebes*:
For half thy Citizens are swept away,
And wanting to thy Triumphs:
And we, the happy remnant, only live
To welcome thee, and dye.

Oedipus. Thus pleasure never comes sincere to men;
But lent by Heav'n upon hard Usury:
And while *Jove* holds us out the Bowl of Joy,
E're it can reach our Lips it's dasht with Gall
By some left-handed God. O mournful Triumph!
O Conquest gain'd abroad and lost at home!
O *Argos* now rejoyce, for *Thebes* lyes low;
Thy slaughter'd Sons now smile, and think they won,
When they can count more *Theban* Ghosts than theirs.

Adrast. No; *Argos* mourns with *Thebes*; you temper'd so
Your Courage while you fought, that Mercy seem'd
The Manlier Virtue, and much more prevail'd:
While *Argos* is a People, think your *Thebes*

Can

Can never want for Subjects: Every Nation
Will crowd to ſerve where *Oedipus* commands.

Creon to Ham. How mean it ſhews to fawn upon the Victor!

Ham. Had you beheld him fight, you had ſaid otherwiſe:
Come, 'tis brave bearing in him, not to envy
Superiour Virtue.

Oed. This indeed is Conqueſt,
To gain a Friend like you: Why were we Foes?

Adraſt. 'Cauſe we were Kings, and each diſdain'd an equal.
I fought to have it in my pow'r to do
What thou haſt done; and ſo to uſe my Conqueſt;
To ſhew thee, Honour was my only Motive,
Know this, that were My Army at thy Gates,
And *Thebes* thus waſte, I would not take the Gift,
Which, like a Toy, dropt from the hands of Fortune,
Lay for the next chance-comer.

Oed. embracing. No more Captive,
But Brother of the War: 'Tis much more pleaſant,
And ſafer, truſt me, thus to meet thy love,
Than when hard Gantlets clench'd our VVarlike Hands,
And kept 'em from ſoft uſe.

Adr. My Conquerour.

Oed My Friend! that other name keeps Enmity alive.
But longer to detain thee were a Crime;
To love, and to *Euridyce*, go free:
Such welcome as a ruin'd Town can give
Expect from me; the reſt let her ſupply.

Adr. I go without a bluſh, though conquer'd twice,
By you and by my Princeſs.

Creon aſide. Then I am Conquer'd thrice; by *Oedipus.*
And her, and ev'n by him, the ſlave of both:
Gods, I'm beholding to you, for making me your Image,
VVou'd I cou'd make you mine. [*Ex.* Creon.

Enter the People with branches in their hands, holding them up, and kneeling: Two Prieſts before them.

Oedipus. Alas, my People!
What means this ſpeechleſs ſorrow, down caſt-eyes,
And lifted hands! if there be one among you
Whom grief has left a tongue, ſpeak for the reſt.

1 *Pr.* O Father of thy Country!
To thee theſe knees are bent, theſe eyes are lifted,
As to a viſible Divinity.
A Prince on whom Heav'n ſafely might repoſe

The busines of Mankind : for Providence
Might on thy bosome sleep secure,
And leave her task to thee.
But where's the Glory of thy former acts ?
Ev'n that's destroy'd when none shall live to speak it.
Millions of subjects shalt thou have ; but mute.
A people of the dead ; a crowded desart.
A Midnight silence at the noon of day.

Oed. O were our Gods as ready with their pity,
As I with mine, this presence shou'd be throng'd
With all I left alive ; and my sad eyes
Not search in vain for friends, whose promis'd fight
Flatter'd my toyls of War.

1 *Pr.* Twice our deliverer.

Oed. Nor are now your vows
Addrest to one who sleeps :
When this unwelcome news first reach'd my ears,
Dymas was sent to *Delphos* to enquire
The Cause and Cure of this contagious ire.
And is this day return'd ; but since his message
Concerns the publick, I refus'd to hear it
But in this general Presence : let him speak.

Dymas. A dreadful answer from the hallow'd Urn,
And sacred *tripous* did the Priestess give,
In these Mysterious words,
The Oracle. *Shed in a curs'd hour, by curs'd hand,*
Blood-Royal unreveng'd, has curs'd the Land.
When Lajus *death is expiated well*
Your Plague shall cease : the rest let Lajus *tell.*

Oed. Dreadful indeed ! blood, and a Kings blood too :
And such a Kings, and by his Subjects shed !
(Else why this Curse on *Thebes* ?) no wonder then
If Monsters, Wars, and Plagues revenge such Crimes !
If Heav'n be just, its whole Artillery,
All must be empty'd on us : Not one bolt
Shall erre from *Thebes* ; but more be call'd for, more !
New moulded thunder of a larger size ;
Driv'n by whole *Jove*. What, touch annointed Pow'r !
Then Gods beware ; *Jove* now'd himself be next ;
Cou'd you but reach him too.

2 *Pr.* We mourn the sad remembrance.

Oed. Well you may :
Worse than a Plague infects you : y'are devoted
To

To Mother Earth, and to th' infernal Pow'rs:
Hell has a right in you: I thank you Gods,
That I'm no *Theban* born: how my blood cruddles!
As if this curse touch'd me! and touch'd me nearer
Than all this presence!——Yes, 'tis a Kings blood,
And I, a King, am ty'd in deeper bonds
To expiate this blood: but where, from whom,
Or how must I attone it? tell me, *Thebans*,
How *Lajus* fell? for a confus'd report
Pass'd through my ears, when first I took the Crown:
But full of hurry, like a morning dream,
It vanish'd in the business of the day.

1 *Pr.* He went in private forth; but thinly follow'd;
And ne're return'd to *Thebes*.

Oed. Nor any from him? came there no attendant?
None to bring news?

2 *Pr.* But one; and he so wounded,
He scarce drew breath to speak some few faint words.

Oed. VVhat were they? something may be learnt from thence.

1 *Pr.* He said a Band of Robbers watch'd their passage;
VVho took advantage of a narrow way,
To murder *Lajus* and the rest: himself
Left too for dead?

Oed. Made you no more enquiry,
But took this bare relation?

2 *Pr.* 'Twas neglected:
For then the Monster *Sphynx* began to rage;
And present cares soon buried the remote;
So was it hush'd, and never since reviv'd.

Oed. Mark, *Thebans*, mark!
Just then, the *Sphynx* began to rage among you;
The Gods took hold ev'n of th' offending minute,
And dated thence your woes: thence will I trace 'em.

1 *Pr.* 'Tis Just thou should'st.

Oed. Hear then this dread imprecation; hear it:
'Tis lay'd on all; not any one exempt:
Bear witness Heav'n, avenge it on the perjur'd.
If any *Theban* born, if any stranger
Reveal this murder, or produce its Author,
Ten Attique Talents be his just reward:
But, if for fear, for favour, or for hire,
The murder he conceal, the curse of *Thebes*
Fall heavy on his head: Unite our Plagues
Ye Gods, and place 'em there: from Fire and Water,
Converse, and all things common, be he banish'd.

But for the murderer's self, unfound by man;
Find him ye Powr's Cœleſtial and Infernal;
And the ſame Fate, or worſe, than *Lajus* met,
Let be his lot: his Children be accurſt;
His Wife and Kindred, all of his be curs'd.
Both Pr. Confirm it, Heav'n!

Enter Jocaſta; *Attended by Women.*

Joc. At your Devotions! Heav'n ſucceed your wiſhes;
And bring th' effect of theſe your pious Pray'rs
On you, and me, and all.
Pr. Avert this Omen, Heav'n!
Oed. O fatal ſound, Unfortunate *Jocaſta!*
What haſt thou ſaid? an ill hour haſt thou choſen
For theſe fore-boding words! why, we were curſing!
Joc. Then may that Curſe fall only where you laid it.
Oed. Speak no more!
For all thou ſay'ſt is ominous: we were curſing;
And that dire imprecation haſt thou faſten'd
On *Thebes*, and thee and me, and all of us.
Joc. Are then my bleſſings turn'd into a curſe?
O Unkind *Oedipus.* My former Lord
Thought me his bleſſing: be thou like my *Lajus.*
Oed. What yet again! the third time haſt thou curs'd me?
This imprecation was for *Lajus* death,
And thou haſt wiſh'd me like him.
Joc. Horrour ſeizes me!
Oed. Why doſt thou gaze upon me? prithee love
Take off thy eye; it burdens me too much.
Joc. The more I look, the more I find of *Lajus*:
His ſpeech, his garb, his Action, nay his frown;
(For I have ſeen it;) but ne're bent on me.
Oed. Are we ſo like?
Joc. In all things but his love.
Oed. I love thee more: ſo well *I* love, words cannot ſpeak how well.
No pious Son e're lov'd his Mother more
Than I my dear *Jocaſta.*
Joc. I love you too
The ſelf ſame way: and when you chid, methought
A Mothers love ſtart up in your defence,
And bade me not be angry: be not you:
For I love *Lajus* ſtill as Wives ſhou'd love:
But you more tenderly, as part of me:
And when I have you in my arms, methinks
I lull my child aſleep.

Oed.

Oed. Then we are bleſt:
And all theſe Curſes ſweep along the skyes
Like empty Clowds; but drop not on our heads.
Joc. I have not joy'd an hour ſince you departed,
For publick Miſeries, and for private fears;
But this bleſt meeting has o'er-pay'd 'em all.
Good fortune that comes ſeldom comes more welcome.
All *I* can wiſh for now, is your conſent
To make my Brother happy.
Oed. How, *Jocaſta*?
Joc. By marriage with his Neece, *Eurydice*!
Oed. Uncle and Neece! they are too near, my Love;
'Tis too like Inceſt: 'tis offence to Kind.
Had I not promis'd, were there no *Adraſtus*,
No choice but *Creon* left her of Mankind,
They ſhou'd not marry; ſpeak no more of it;
The thought diſturbs me.
Joc. Heav'n can never bleſs
A Vow ſo broken, which I made to *Creon*;
Remember he's my Brother.
Oed. That's the bar:
And ſhe thy Daughter: Nature wou'd abhor
To be forc'd back again upon her ſelf,
And like a whirle-pool ſwallow her own ſtreams.
Joc. Be not diſpleas'd; I'll move the Suit no more.
Oed. No, do not; for, I know not why, it ſhakes me
When *I* but think on Inceſt; move we forward
To thank the Gods for my ſucceſs, and pray
To waſh the guilt of Royal Blood away. [*Exeunt Omnes.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

An open Gallery. A Royal Bed-Chamber being ſuppos'd behind.

The Time, Night. Thunder, &c.

Hæmon, Alcander, Pyraemon.

Hæm. SURE 'tis the end of all things! Fate has torn
The lock of time off, and his head is now
The gaſtly Ball of round Eternity!
Call you theſe Peals of Thunder, but the yawn
Of bellowing Clouds? By *Jove*, they ſeem to me

The World's last groans; and those vast sheets of Flame
Are its last blaze! The Tapers of the Gods,
The Sun and Moon, run down like waxen-Globes;
The shooting Stars end all in purple Gellies,
And Chaos is at hand.

Pyr. 'Tis Midnight, yet there's not a *Theban* sleeps,
But such as ne're must wake. All crow'd about
The Palace, and implore, as from a God,
Help of the King; who, from the Battlement,
By the red Lightning's glare, descry'd afar,
Atones the angry Powers. *Thunder, &c.*

Ham. Ha! *Pyracmon*, look; Behold, *Alcander*, from yon West of Heav'n,
The perfect Figures of a Man and Woman
A Scepter bright with Gems in each right hand,
Their flowing Robes of dazling Purple made,
Distinctly yonder in that point they stand,
Just West; a bloody red stains all the place:
And see, their Faces are quite hid in Clouds.

Pyr. Clusters of Golden Stars hang o're their heads,
And seem so crouded, that they burst upon 'em.
All dart at once their baleful influence,
In leaking Fire.

Alc. Long-bearded Comets stick,
Like flaming Porcupines, to their left sides,
As they would shoot their Quills into their hearts.

Ham. But see! the King, and Queen, and all the Court!
Did ever Day or Night shew ought like this?

Thunders again. The Scene drops, and discovers the Prodigies.

Enter Oedipus, Jocasta, Euridice, Adrastus, *all coming forward with amazement.*

Oed. Answer, you Pow'rs Divine; spare all this noise,
This rack of Heav'n; and speak your fatal pleasure,
Why breaks yon dark and dusky Orb away?
Why from the bleeding Womb of monstrous Night,
Burst forth such Miriads of abortive Stars?
Ha! my *Jocasta*, look! the Silver Moon!
A setling Crimson stains her beauteous Face?
She's all o're Blood? and look, behold again,
What mean the mystick Heav'ns, she journies on?
A vast Eclipse darkens the labouring Planets:
Sound there, sound all our Instruments of War;
Clarions and Trumpets, Silver, Brass, and Iron,

And

And beat a thousand Drums to help her Labour.

Adr. 'Tis vain, yet see the Prodigies continue;
Let's gaze no more, the Gods are Humorous.

Oed. Forbear, rash man. I once more I ask your pleasure;
If that the glow-worm light of humane Reason
Might dare to offer at immortal knowledge,
And cope with Gods, why all this storm of Nature?
Why do the Rocks split, and why roars the Sea?
Why these Portents in Heav'n, and Plagues on Earth?
Why yon' Gigantick Forms, Ethereal Monsters?
Alas! is all this but to fright the Dwarfs
Which your own hands have made? Then be it so,
Or if the Fates resolve some Expiation
For murder'd *Laius*; hear me, hear me, Gods!
Hear me thus prostrate, spare this groaning Land,
Save Innocent *Thebes*, stop the Tyrant Death;
Do this, and lo I stand up an Oblation
To meet your swiftest and severest anger,
Shoot all at once, and strike me to the Center.

The Cloud draws that veil'd the heads of the Figures in the Skie, and shews 'em Crown'd, with the names of Oedipus and Iocasta written above in great Characters of Gold.

Adr. Either I dream, and all my cooler senses
Are vanish'd with that Cloud that fleets away;
Or, just above those two Majestick heads
I see, I read distinctly in large gold,
Oedipus and *Jocasta*.

Alc. I read the same.

Adr. 'Tis wonderful; yet ought not man to wade
Too far in the vast deep of Destiny.

Thunder, and the Prodigies vanish.

Joc. My Lord, my *Oedipus*, why gaze you now,
When the whole Heav'n is clear, as if the Gods
Had some new Monsters made? will you not turn,
And bless your People; who devour each word
You breathe.

Oed. It shall be so. Yes, I will dye, O *Thebes*, to save thee!
Draw from my heart my blood, with more content
Than e're I wore thy Crown. Yet, O *Jocasta*!
By all the indearments of miraculous love,
By all our languishings, our fears in pleasure,
Which oft have made us wonder; here I swear
On thy fair hand, upon thy breast I swear,
I cannot call to mind, from budding Childhood

To

To blooming youth, a Crime by me committed,
For which the awful Gods should doom my death.

Joc. 'Tis not you, my Lord,
But he who murder'd *Lajus*, frees the Land:
Were you, which is impossible, the man,
Perhaps my Ponyard first should drink your blood;
But you are innocent, as your *Jocasta*,
From Crimes like those. This made me violent
To save your life, which you unjust would lose:
Nor can you comprehend, with deepest thought,
The horrid Agony you cast me in,
When you resolv'd to dye.

Oed. Is't possible?

Joc. Alas! why start you so? Her stiff'ning grief,
Who saw her Children slaughter'd all at once,
Was dull to mine: Methinks I should have made
My bosom bare against the armed God,
To save my *Oedipus!*

Oed. I pray, no more.

Joc. You've silenc'd me, my Lord.

Oed. Pardon me, dear *Jocasta*,
Pardon a heart that sinks with sufferings,
And can but vent it self in sobs and murmurs:
Yet to restore my peace, I'll find him out.
Yes, yes, you Gods! you shall have ample vengeance
On *Lajus* murderer. O, the Traytors name!
I'll know't, I will; Art shall be conjur'd for it,
And Nature all unravel'd.

Joc. Sacred Sir——

Oed. Rage will have way, and 'tis but just; I'll fetch him,
Tho' lodg'd in Air, upon a Dragon's wing,
Tho' Rocks should hide him: nay he shall be dragg'd
From Hell, if Charms can hurry him along:
His Ghost shall be, by sage *Tiresias* pow'r,
(*Tiresias*, that rules all beneath the Moon)
Confin'd to flesh, to suffer death once more;
And then be plung'd in his first fires again.

Enter Creon.

Cre. My Lord,
Tiresias attends your pleasure.

Oed. Haste, and bring him in.
O, my *Jocasta*, *Eurydice*, *Adrastus*,
Creon, and all ye *Thebans*, now the end

Of

Of Plagues, of Madneſs, Murders, Prodigies,
Draws on: This Battle of the Heav'ns and Earth
Shall by his wiſdom be reduc'd to peace.

Enter Tireſias, *leaning on a Staff, led by his Daughter* Manto, *follow'd by other* Thebans.

O thou, whoſe moſt aſpiring mind
Know'ſt all the buſineſs of the Courts above,
Open'ſt the Cloſets of the Gods, and dares
To mix with *Jove* himſelf and Fate at Council;
O Prophet, anſwer me, declare aloud
The Traytor who conſpir'd the death of *Lajus:*
Or be they more, who from malignant Stars
Have drawn this Plague that blaſts unhappy *Thebes.*

Tir. We muſt no more than Fate commiſſions us,
To tell; yet ſomething, and of moment, *I'll* unfold,
If that the God would wake; I feel him now,
Like a ſtrong Spirit Charm'd into a Tree,
That leaps, and moves the Wood without a Wind:
The rouz'd God, as all this while he lay
Intom'd alive, ſtarts and dilates himſelf:
He ſtruggles and he tears my aged Trunk
With holy Fury, my old Arteries burſt,
My rivel'd skin,
Like Parchment, crackles at the hallow'd fire;
I ſhall be young again: *Manto*, my Daughter,
Thou haſt a voice that might have ſav'd the Bard
Of *Thrace*, and forc'd the raging Bacchanals,
With lifted Prongs, to liſten to thy airs:
O Charm this God, this Fury in my boſom,
Lull him with tuneful notes, and artful ſtrings,
With pow'rful ſtrains; *Manto*, my lovely Child,
Sooth the unruly God-head to be mild.

SONG to *Apollo.*

PHœbus, *God below'd by men,*
At thy dawn, every Beaſt is rouz'd in his Den;
At thy ſetting, all the Birds of thy abſence complain,
And we dye, all dye till the morning comes again.
Phœbus, *God below'd by men,*
Idol of the Eaſtern Kings,
Awfull as the God who ſings

His Thunder round, and the Lightning wings;
God of Songs, and Orphean strings,
Who to this mortal bosom brings,
All harmonious heav'nly things!
Thy drowsie Prophet to revive,
Ten thousand thousand forms before him drive;
With Chariots and Horses all o' fire awake him,
Convulsions, and Furies, and Prophesies shake him,
Let him tell it in groans, tho' he bend with the load,
Tho' he burst with the weight of the terrible God.

Tir. The wretch, who shed the blood of old *Labdacides*,
Lives, and is great;
But cruel greatness ne're was long:
The first of *Lajus* blood his life did seize,
And urg'd his Fate,
Which else had lasting been and strong.
The wretch, who *Lajus* kill'd, must bleed or fly;
Or *Thebes*, consum'd with Plagues, in ruines lye.

Oed. The first of *Lajus* blood I pronounce the person;
May the God roar from thy Prophetick mouth,
That even the dead may start up, to behold:
Name him, *I* say, that most accursed wretch,
For by the Stars he dies:
Speak, *I* command thee;
By *Phœbus*, speak; for sudden death's his doom:
Here shall he fall, bleed on this very spot;
His name, I charge thee once more, speak.

Tir. 'Tis lost,
Like what we think can never shun remembrance;
Yet of a sudden's gone beyond the Clouds.

Oed. Fetch it from thence; I'll have't, where-e're it be.

Cre. Let me intreat you, sacred Sir, be calm,
And *Creon* shall point out the great Offendor.
'Tis true, respect of Nature might injoin
Me silence, at another time; but, oh,
Much more the pow'r of my eternal Love!
That, that should strike me dumb: yet *Thebes*, my Country——
I'll break through all, to succour thee, poor City!
O, I must speak.

Oed. Speak then, if ought thou know'st.
As much thou seem'st to know, delay no longer.

Cre. O Beauty! O illustrious Royal Maid!
To whom my Vows were ever paid till now,
And with such modest, chaste, and pure affection,

The

The coldeſt Nymph might read 'em without bluſhing;
Art thou the Murdreſs then of wretched *Lajus*?
And *I*, muſt I accuſe thee! O my tears!
Why will you fall in ſo abhorr'd a Cauſe?
But that thy beauteous, barbarous, hand deſtroy'd
Thy Father (O monſtrous act!) both Gods
And men at once take notice.

Oed. Eurydice!

Eur. Traytor, go on; I ſcorn thy little malice,
And knowing more my perfect innocence,
Than Gods and men, then how much more than thee,
Who art their oppoſite, and form'd a Lyar,
I thus diſdain thee! Thou once didſt talk of Love;
Becauſe *I* hate thy love,
Thou doſt accuſe me.

Adr. Villain, inglorious Villain,
And Traytor, double damn'd, who durſt blaſpheme
The ſpotleſs virtue of the brighteſt beauty;
Thou dy'ſt: nor ſhall the ſacred Majeſty, [*Draws and wounds him.*
That guards this place, preſerve thee from my rage.

Oed. Diſarm 'em both: Prince I ſhall make you know
That I can tame you twice. Guards, ſeize him.

Adr. Sir,
I muſt acknowledge in another Cauſe
Repentance might abaſh me; but I glory
In this, and ſmile to ſee the Traytor's Blood.

Oed. Creon, you ſhall be ſatisfy'd at full.

Cre. My hurt is nothing, Sir; but *I* appeal
To wiſe *Tireſias*, if my accuſation
Be not moſt true. The firſt of *Lajus* blood
Gave him his death. *Is* there a Prince before her?
Then ſhe is faultleſs, and *I* ask her Pardon.
And may this blood ne're ceaſe to drop, O *Thebes*,
If pity of thy ſufferings did not move me
To ſhew the Cure which Heav'n it ſelf preſcrib'd.

Eur. Yes, *Thebans*, *I* will dye to ſave your lives,
More willingly than you can wiſh my fate;
But let this good, this wiſe, this holy man
Pronounce my Sentence: for to fall by him,
By the vile breath of that prodigious Villain,
Would ſink my Soul, tho' I ſhould dye a Martyr.

Adr. Unhand me, ſlaves. O mightieſt of Kings,
See at your feet a Prince not us'd to kneel;
Touch not *Eurydice*, by all the Gods,
As you would ſave your *Thebes*, but take my life:

For, ſhould ſhe periſh, Heav'n would heap Plagues on Plagues,
Rain Sulphur down, hurle kindled bolts
Upon your guilty heads.

Cre. You turn to Gallantry, what is but juſtice:
Proof will be eaſy made. *Adraſtus* was
The Robber who bereft th' unhappy King
Of life; becauſe he flatly had deny'd
To make ſo poor a Prince his Son-in-law:
Therefore 'twere fit that both ſhould periſh.

1 *Theb.* Both, let both dye.

All Theb. Both, both; let 'em dye.

Oed. Hence, you wild herd! For your Ring-leader here,
He ſhall be made Example. *Hamon*, take him.

1 *Theb.* Mercy, O mercy.

Oed. Mutiny in my preſence!
Hence, let me ſee that buſie face no more.

Tir. Thebans, what madneſs makes you drunk with rage?
Enough of guilty death's already acted:
Fierce *Creon* has accus'd *Eurydice*,
With Prince *Adraſtus*; which the God reproves
By inward Checks, and leaves their Fates in doubt.

Oed. Therefore inſtruct us what remains to do,
Or ſuffer; for *I* feel a ſleep like death
Upon me, and I ſigh to be at reſt.

Tir. Since that the pow'rs divine refuſe to clear
The miſtic deed, I'll to the Grove of Furies;
There I can force th' Infernal Gods to ſhew
Their horrid Forms;
Each trembling Ghoſt ſhall riſe,
And leave their grizly King without a waiter:
For Prince *Adraſtus* and *Eurydice*,
My life's engag'd, I'll guard 'em in the Fane,
Till the dark Myſteries of Hell are done.
Follow me, Princeſs; *Thebans*, all to reſt.
O, *Oedipus*, to morrow ——but no more.
If that thy wakeful Genius will permit,
Indulge thy Brain this night with ſofter ſlumbers:
To morrow, O to morrow! —ſleep, my Son;
And in prophetick dreams thy Fate be ſhown.

[*Ex.* Tireſ. Adraſt. Euryd. Manto, Thebans.

Manent *Oed. Joc. Creon, Pyrac. Ham. Alcan.*]

Oed. To bed, my Fair, my Dear, my beſt *Jocaſta*.
After The toils of War, 'tis wondrous ſtrange

Our

Our loves ſhould thus be daſh'd. One moment's thought,
And I'll approach the Arms of my belov'd.

Joc. Conſume whole years in care, ſo now and then
I may have leave to feed my famiſh'd eyes
With one ſhort paſſing glance, and ſigh my Vows:
This, and no more, my Lord, is all the paſſion
Of Languiſhing *Jocaſta*. [*Exit.*

Oed. Thou ſofteſt, ſweeteſt of the World! good night.
Nay, ſhe is beauteous too; yet, mighty Love!
I never offer'd to obey thy Laws,
But an unuſual chillneſs came upon me;
An unknown hand ſtill check'd my forward joy,
Daſh'd me with bluſhes, tho' no light was near.
That ev'n the Act became a violation.

Pyr. He's ſtrangely thoughtful.

Oed. Hark! who was that? Ha! *Creon*, didſt thou call me?

Cre. Not I, my gracious Lord, nor any here.

Oed. That's ſtrange! methought I heard a doleful voice
Cry'd *Oedipus*.——The Prophet bad me ſleep;
He talk'd of Dreams and Viſions, and to morrow!
I'll muſe no more on't, come what will or can,
My thoughts are clearer than unclouded Stars;
And with thoſe thoughts I'll reſt: *Creon*, good night. [*Ex. with* Hæmon.

Cre. Sleep ſeal your eyes, Sir, Eternal ſleep.
But if he muſt ſleep and wake again, O all
Tormenting Dreams, wild horrours of the night,
And Hags of Fancy wing him through the air:
From Precipices hurl him headlong down;
Charybdis roar, and death be ſet before him.

Alc. Your Curſes have already ta'ne effect;
For he looks very ſad.

Cre. May he be rooted, where he ſtands, for ever;
His eye-balls never move, brows be unbent,
His blood, his Entrails, Liver, heart and bowels,
Be blacker than the place I wiſh him, Hell.

Pyr. No more: you tear your ſelf, but vex not him.
Methinks 'twere brave this night to force the Temple,
While blind *Tireſias* conjures up the Fiends,
And paſs the time with nice *Eurydice*.

Alc. Try promiſes, and threats, and if all fail,
Since Hell's broke looſe, why ſhould not you be mad?
Raviſh, and leave her dead, with her *Adraſtus*.

Cre. Were the Globe mine, I'd give a Province hourly
For ſuch another thought. Luſt, and Revenge!
To ſtab at once the only man I hate,

And

And to enjoy the Woman whom I love!
I ask no more of my auſpicious Stars,
The reſt as Fortune pleaſe; ſo but this night
She play me fair, why, let her turn for ever.

Enter Hæmon.

Ham. My Lord, the troubled King is gone to reſt;
Yet, e're he ſlept, commanded me to clear
The Antichambers: none muſt dare be near him.
Cre. Hamon, you do your duty;—— [*Thunder.*
And we obey.——The night grows yet more dreadful!
'Tis juſt that all retire to their devotions;
The Gods are angry: but to morrows dawn,
If Prophets do not lye, will make all clear. [*As they go off,*

Oedipus *Enters, walking aſleep in his ſhirt, with a Dagger in his right hand, and a Taper in his left.*

Oed. O, my *Jocaſta*! 'tis for this the wet
Starv'd Soldier lies all night on the cold ground;
For this he bears the ſtorms
Of Winter Camps, and freezes in his Arms:
To be thus circled, to be thus embrac'd;
That I could hold thee ever!——Ha! where art thou?
What means this melancholly light, that ſeems
The gloom of glowing embers?
The Curtain's drawn; and ſee, ſhe's here again!
Jocaſta? Ha! what, fall'n aſleep ſo ſoon?
How fares my Love? this Taper will inform me.
Ha! Lightning blaſt me, Thunder
Rivet me ever to *Prometheus* Rock,
And Vultures gnaw out my Inceſtuous heart,
By all the Gods! my Mother *Merope*!
My Sword, a Dagger; Ha, who waits there? ſlaves,
My Sword: what, *Hamon*, dar'ſt thou, Villain, ſtop me!
With thy own Ponyard periſh. Ha! who's this?
Or is't a change of Death? By all my Honours,
New murder; thou haſt ſlain old *Polybus*:
Inceſt and Parricide, thy Father's murder'd!
Out thou infernal flame: now all is dark,
All blind and diſmal, moſt triumphant miſchief!
And now while thus I ſtalk about the room,
I challenge Fate to find another wretch
Like *Oedipus*! [*Thunder, &c.*

Enter

Enter Jocasta *attended, with Lights, in a Night-gown.*

Oed. Night, Horrour, Death, Confusion, Hell, and Furies!
Where am I? O, *Jocasta*, let me hold thee,
Thus to my bosom, ages; let me grasp thee:
All that the hardest temper'd weather'd flesh,
With fiercest humane Spirits inspir'd, can dare
Or do, *I* dare; but, oh you Pow'rs, this was
By infinite degrees too much for man.
Methinks my deafn'd ears
Are burst; my eyes, as if they had been knock'd
By some tempestuous hand, shoot flashing fire:
That sleep should do this!

Joc. Then my fears were true.
Methought I heard your voice, and yet I doubted,
Now roaring like the Ocean, when the winds
Fight with the waves; now in a still small tone
Your dying accents fell, as racking ships,
After the dreadful yell, sink murmuring down,
And bubble up a noise.

Oed. Trust me, thou Fairest, best of all thy Kind,
None e're in Dreams was tortur'd so before,
Yet what most shocks the niceness of my temper,
Ev'n far beyond the killing of my Father,
And my own death, is, that this horrid sleep
Dash'd my sick fancy with an act of Incest:
I dreamt, *Jocasta*, that thou were my Mother;
Which, tho' impossible, so damps my Spirits,
That I cou'd do a mischief on my self,
Lest I should sleep and Dream the like again.

Joc. O, *Oedipus*, too well I understand you!
I know the wrath of Heav'n, the care of *Thebes*,
The cries of its Inhabitants, War's toils,
And thousand other labours of the State,
Are all referr'd to you, and ought to take you
For ever from *Jocasta*.

Oed. Life of my life, and treasure of my Soul,
Heav'n knows I love thee.

Joc. O, you think me vile,
And of an inclination so ignoble,
That I must hide me from your eyes for ever.
Be witness, Gods, and strike *Jocasta* dead,
If an immodest thought, or low desire
Inflam'd my breast, since first our Loves were lighted.

Oed.

Oed. O rise, and add not, by thy cruel kindness,
A grief more sensible than all my tormnets.
Thou think'st my dreams are forg'd; but by thy self,
The greatest Oath, I swear, they are most true:
But, be they what they will, I here dismiss 'em;
Begon, *Chimeras*, to your Mother Clouds,
Is there a fault in us? Have we not search'd
The womb of Heav'n, examin'd all the Entrails
Of Birds and Beasts, and tir'd the Prophet's Art?
Yet what avails? he, and the Gods together,
Seem like Physicians at a loss to help us:
Therefore, like wretches that have linger'd long,
We'll snatch the strongest Cordial of our love;
To bed, my Fair.

Ghost within. Oedipus!

Oed. Ha! who calls?
Did'st thou not hear a voice?

Joc. Alas! I did.

Ghost. Jocasta!

Joc. O my love, my Lord, support me!

Oed. Call louder, till you burst your airy Forms.
Rest on my hand. Thus arm'd with innocence,
I'll face these babling *Dæmons* of the air.
In spight of Ghosts, I'll on,
Tho' round my Bed the Furies plant their Charms;
I'll break 'em, with *Jocasta* in my arms.
Clasp'd in the folds of love, I'll wait my doom;
And act my joys, tho' Thunder shake the room. [*Exeunt.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

A dark Grove.

Enter Creon.

Cre. 'TIS better not to be, than to be unhappy.

Dio. What mean you by these words?

Cre. 'Tis better not to be, than to be *Creon.*
A thinking soul is punishment enough;
But when 'tis great, like mine, and wretched too,
Then every thought draws blood.

Dio. You are not wretched.

Cre. I am: My Soul's ill married to my Body.

I wou'd be young, be handſom, be belov'd:
Cou'd I but breathe my ſelf into *Adraſtus*——
Dio. You rave; call home your thoughts.
Cre. I prithee let my ſoul take air a while;
Were ſhe in *Oedipus*, I were a King;
Then I had kill'd a Monſter, gain'd a Battel;
And had my Rival pris'ner; brave, brave actions:
Why have not I done theſe?
Dio. Your fortune hinder'd.
Cre. There's it: I have a ſoul to do 'em all:
But fortune will have nothing done that's great,
But by young handſome fools: Body and brawn
Do all her work: *Hercules* was a fool,
And ſtraight grew famous: a mad boiſtrous fool,
Nay worſe, a Womans fool.
Fool is the ſtuff, of which Heav'n makes a Hero.
Dio. A Serpent ne're becomes a flying Dragon,
Till he has eat a Serpent.
Cre. Goes it there!
I underſtand thee, I muſt kill *Adraſtus*.
Dio. Or not enjoy your Miſtreſs:
Eurydice and he are pris'ners here,
But will not long be ſo: this tell-tale Ghoſt
Perhaps will clear e'm both.
Cre. Well: 'tis reſolv'd.
Dio. The Princeſs walks this way;
You muſt not meet her,
Till this be done.
Cre. I muſt.
Dio. She hates your ſight:
And more ſince you accus'd her.
Cre. Urge it not.
I cannot ſtay to tell thee my deſign;
For ſhe's too near.

Enter Eurydice.

How, Madam, were your thoughts employ'd!
Eur. On death, and thee.
Cre. Then were they not well ſorted: life and me
Had been the better match.
Eur. No, I was thinking
On two the moſt deteſted things in Nature:
And they are death and thee.

Cre. The thought of death to one near death is dreadful:
O 'tis a fearful thing to be no more.
Or if to be, to wander after death;
To walk, as ſpirits do, in Brakes all day;
And when the darkneſs comes, to glide in paths
That lead to Graves: and in the ſilent Vault,
Where Lyes your own Pale ſhrowd, to hover o're it,
Striving to enter your forbidden Corps;
And often, often, vainly breathe your Ghoſt
Into your lifeleſs lips:
Then, like a lone benighted Travellour
Shut out from lodging, ſhall your groans be anſwer'd
By whiſtling winds, whoſe every blaſt will ſhake
Your tender Form to Attoms.

Eur. Muſt I be this thin Being? and thus wander!
No quiet after death!

Cre. None: you muſt leave
This beauteous body; all this youth and freſhneſs
Muſt be no more the object of deſire,
But a cold lump of Clay;
Which then your diſcontented Ghoſt will leave,
And loath its former lodging.
This is the beſt of what comes after death,
Ev'n to the beſt.

Eur. What then ſhall be thy Lot?
Eternal torments, Baths of boiling Sulphur;
Viciſſitudes of Fires, and then of Froſts;
And an old Guardian Fiend, ugly as thou art,
To hallow in thy Ears at every laſh;
This for *Eurydice*; theſe for her *Adraſtus*.

Cre. For her *Adraſtus!*

Eur. Yes; for her *Adraſtus:*
For death ſhall ne're divide us: death, what's death!

Dio. You ſeem'd to fear it.

Eur. But I more fear *Creon*:
To take that hunch-back'd Monſter in my arms;
Th' excreſence of a man.

Dio. to Cre. See what you've gain'd.

Eur. Death only can be dreadful to the bad:
To innocence, 'tis like a bug-bear dreſs'd
To fright'n Children; pull but off his Maſque
And he'll appear a friend.

Cre. You talk too ſlightly
Of death and hell. Let me inform you better.

Eur. You beſt can tell the news of your own Country.

Dio.

Dio. Nay now you are too ſharp.
Eur. Can I be ſo to one who has accus'd me
Of murder and of parricide?
Cre. You provok'd me:
And yet I only did thus far accuſe you,
As next of blood to *Lajus*: be advis'd,
And you may live.
Eur. The means.
Cre. 'Tis offer'd you.
The Fool *Adraſtus* has accus'd himſelf.
Eur. He has indeed, to take the guilt from me.
Cre. He ſays he loves you; if he does, 'tis well:
He ne're cou'd prove it in a better time.
Eur. Then death muſt be his recompence for love!
Cre. 'Tis a Fools juſt reward:
The wiſe can make a better uſe of life:
But 'tis the young mans pleaſure; his ambition:
I grudge him not that favour.
Eur. When he's dead,
Where ſhall I find his equal?
Cre. Every where.
Fine empty things, like him,
The Court ſwarms with 'em.
Fine fighting things; in Camps they are ſo common,
Crows feed on nothing elſe: plenty of Fools;
A glut of 'em in *Thebes*.
And fortune ſtill takes care they ſhou'd be ſeen:
She places 'em aloft, o'th' topmoſt ſpoke
Of all her Wheel: Fools are the daily work
Of Nature; her vocation: if ſhe form
A man, ſhe loſes by't, 'tis too expenſive;
'Twou'd make ten Fools: A man's a Prodigy.
Eur. That is a *Creon*: O thou black detractor,
Who ſpitt'ſt thy venom againſt Gods and man!
Thou enemy of eyes:
Thou who lov'ſt nothing but what nothing loves,
And that's thy ſelf: who haſt conſpir'd againſt
My life and fame, to make me loath'd by all;
And only fit for thee.
But for *Adraſtus* death, good Gods, his death!
What Curſe ſhall I invent?
Dio. No more: he's here.
Eur. He ſhall be ever here.
He who wou'd give his life; give up his fame.——

Enter Adraſtus.

If all the Excellence of woman-kind
Were mine;——No, 'tis too little all for him:
Were I made up of endleſs, endleſs joyes——
Adr. And ſo thou art:
The man who loves like me,
Wou'd think ev'n Infamy, the worſt of Ills,
Were cheaply purchaſt, were thy love the price:
Uncrown'd, a Captive, nothing left, but Honour;
'Tis the laſt thing a Prince ſhou'd throw away,
But when the ſtorm grows loud, and threatens love,
Throw ev'n that over-board, for Love's the Jewel;
And laſt it muſt be kept.
Cre. to Dio. Work him be ſure
To rage, he's paſſionate;
Make him th' Aggreſſor.
Dio. O falſe love; falſe honour.
Cre. Diſſembled both, and falſe!
Adr. Dar'ſt thou ſay this to me?
Cre. To you; why what are you, that I ſhould fear you?
I am not *Lajus*: Hear me, Prince of *Argos*,
You give what's nothing, when you give your honour;
'Tis gone; 'tis loſt in battel. For your love,
Vows made in wine are not ſo falſe as that:
You kill'd her Father; you confeſs'd you did:
A mighty argument to prove your paſſion to the Daughter.
Adraſt. aſide. Gods, muſt I bear this brand, and not retort
The lye to his foul throat!
Dio. Baſely, you kill'd him.
Adr. aſide. O, I burn inward: my blood's all o' fire.
Alcides, when the poiſon'd ſhirt ſate cloſeſt,
Had but an Ague fit to this my Feaver.
Yet, for *Eurydice*, ev'n this I'll ſuffer,
To free my love, ——Well then, I kill'd him baſely.
Cre. Fairly, I'm ſure you cou'd not.
Dio. Nor alone.
Cre. You had your fellow Thieves about you, Prince;
They Conquer'd, and you kill'd.
Adr. aſide. Down ſwelling heart!
'Tis for thy Princeſs all. —— O my *Eurydice!*—— [*To her.*
Euryd. to him. Reproach not thus the weakneſs of my Sex,
As if I cou'd not bear a ſhameful death,
Rather than ſee you burden'd with a Crime

Of

Of which I know you free.
Cre. You do ill Madam,
To let your head-long Love triumph o're Nature:
Dare you defend your Father's Murderer?
Eur. You know he kill'd him not.
Cre. Let him say so.
Dio. See he stands mute.
Cre. O pow'r of Conscience, even in wicked men!
It works, it stings, it will not let him utter
One syllable, one, no to clear himself
From the most base, detested, horrid act
That e're cou'd stain a Villain, not a Prince.
Adr. Ha! Villain.
Dio. Eccho to him Groves: cry Villain.
Adr. Let me consider! did I Murther *Lajus*,
Thus like a Villain?
Cre. Best revoke your words;
And say you kill'd him not.
Adr. Not like a Villain; prithee change me that
For any other Lye.
Dio. No, Villain, Villain.
Cre. You kill'd him not! proclaim your innocence,
Accuse the Princess: So I knew 'twould be.
Adr. I thank thee, thou instruct'st me:
No matter how I kill'd him.
Cre. aside. Cool'd again.
Eur. Thou, who usurp'st the sacred name of Conscience,
Did not thy own declare him innocent;
To me declare him so? The King shall know it.
Cre. You will not be believ'd, for I'll forswear it.
Eur. What's now thy Conscience?
Cre. 'Tis my Slave, my Drudge, my supple Glove,
My upper Garment, to put on, throw off,
As I think best: 'Tis my obedient conscience.
Adr. Infamous wretch!
Cre. My Conscience shall not do me the ill office
To save a Rivals life; when thou art dead,
(As dead thou shalt be, or be yet more base
Than thou think'st me,
By forfeiting her life, to save thy own.—)
Know this, and let it grate thy very Soul,
She shall be mine: (she is, if Vows were binding;)
Mark me, the fruit of all thy faith and passion,
Ev'n of th' foolish death, shall all be mine.
Adr. Thine, say'st thou, Monster;

Shall

Shall my Love be thine?
O, I can bear no more!
Thy cunning Engines, have with labour rais'd
My heavy anger, like a mighty weight,
To fall and paſh thee dead.
See here thy Nuptials; ſee, thou raſh *Ixion*, [*Draws.*
Thy promis'd *Juno* vaniſh'd in a Cloud;
And in her room avenging Thunder rowls
To blaſt thee thus.——Come both—— [*Both draw.*
Cre. 'Tis what I wiſh'd!
Now ſee whoſe Arm can launch the ſurer bolt,
And who's the better *Jove.*—— [*Fight.*
Eur. Help; Murther, help!

Enter Hæmon *and Guards, run betwixt them, and beat down their Swords.*

Hæm. Hold; hold your impious hands: I think the Furies,
To whom this Grove is hallow'd, have inſpir'd you:
Now, by my ſoul, the holieſt earth of *Thebes*
You have prophan'd with war. Nor Tree, nor Plant
Grows here, but what is fed with Magick Juice,
All full of humane Souls; that cleave their barks
To dance at Midnight by the Moons pale beams:
At leaſt two hundred years theſe reverend Shades
Have known no blood, but of black Sheep and Oxen,
Shed by the Prieſts own hand to *Proſerpine.*
Adr. Forgive a Strangers ignorance: I knew not
The honours of the place.
Hæm. Thou, *Creon*, didſt.
Not *Oedipus*, were all his Foes here lodg'd,
Durſt violate the Religion of theſe Groves,
To touch one ſingle hair: but muſt, unarm'd,
Parle, as in Truce, or ſurlily avoid
What moſt he long'd to kill.
Cre. I drew not firſt;
But in my own defence.
Adr. I was provok'd,
Beyond Man's patience: all reproach cou'd urge
Was us'd to kindle one not apt to bear.
Hæm. 'Tis *Oedipus*, not I, muſt judge this Act:
Lord *Creon*, you and *Diocles* retire:
Tireſias, and the Brother-hood of Prieſts,
Approach the place: None at theſe Rites aſſiſt,
But you th'accus'd, who by the mouth of *Lajus*

Muſt

Muſt be abſolv'd or doom'd.
Adr. I bear my fortune.
Eur. And I provoke my tryal.
Ham. 'Tis at hand.
For ſee the Prophet comes with Vervain crown'd,
The Prieſts with Yeugh, a venerable band;
We leave you to the Gods.

[*Ex.* Hæmon *with* Creon *and* Diocles.

Enter Tireſias, *led by* Manto: *The Prieſts follow; all cloathed in long black Habits.*

Tir. Approach, ye Lovers;
I'll-fated Pair! whom, ſeeing not, I know:
This day your kindly Stars in Heav'n were joyn'd:
When lo, an envious Planet interpos'd,
And threatn'd both with death: I fear, I fear.
Eur. Is there no God ſo much a friend to love,
Who can controle the malice of our fate?
Are they all deaf? or have the Gyants Heav'n?
Tir. The Gods are juſt.——
But how can Finite meaſure Infinite?
Reaſon! alas, it does not know it ſelf!
Yet Man, vain Man, wou'd with this ſhort-lin'd Plummet,
Fathom the vaſt Abyſſe of Heav'nly juſtice.
What ever is, is in its Cauſes juſt;
Since all things are by Fate. But pur-blind Man
Sees but a part o'th' Chain; the neareſt links;
His eyes not carrying to that equal Beam
That poizes all above.
Eur. Then we muſt dye!
Tir. The danger's imminent this day.
Adr. Why then there's one day leſs for humane ills:
And who wou'd moan himſelf, for ſuffering that,
Which in a day muſt paſs? ſomething, or nothing——
I ſhall be what I was again, before
I was *Adraſtus*;——
Penurious Heav'n canſt thou not add a night
To our one day; give me a night with her,
And I'll give all the reſt.
Tir. She broke her Vow
Firſt made to *Creon*. But the time calls on:
And *Lajus* death muſt now be made more plain.
How loth I am to have recourſe to Rites
So full of horrour, that I once rejoyce

I want the use of Sight.—

1 *Pr.* The Ceremonies stay.

Tir. Chuse the darkest part o'th' Grove;
Such as Ghosts at noon-day love.
Dig a Trench, and dig it nigh
Where the bones of *Lajus* lye.
Altars rais'd of Turf or Stone,
Will th' Infernal Pow'rs have none.
Answer me, if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done?

Tir. Is the Sacrifice made fit?
Draw her backward to the pit:
Draw the barren Heyfer back;
Barren let her be and black.
Cut the curled hair that grows
Full betwixt her horns and brows:
And turn your faces from the Sun:
Answer me, if this be done?

All Pr. 'Tis done.

Tir. Pour in blood, and blood like wine,
To Mother Earth and *Proserpine*:
Mingle Milk into the stream;
Feast the Ghosts that love the steam;
Snatch a brand from funeral pile;
Tosse it in to make 'em boil;
And turn your faces from the Sun;
Answer me, if all be done?

All Pr. All is done.

[*Peal of Thunder; and flashes of Lightning; then groaning below the Stage.*

Manto. O, what Laments are those?

Tir. The groans of Ghosts, that cleave the Earth with pain:
And heave it up: they pant and stick half way.

[*The Stage wholly darkn'd.*

Man. And now a sudden darkness covers all,
True genuine Night: Night added to the Groves;
The Fogs are blown full in the Face of Heav'n.

Tir. Am I but half obey'd: Infernal Gods,
Must you have Musick too? then tune your voices,
And let 'em have such sounds as Hell ne're heard
Since *Orpheus* brib'd the Shades.

Musick first. Then Sing. {*This to be set through.*

1. *Hear, ye sullen Pow'rs below:*
Hear, ye taskers of the dead.

2. You

2. *You that boiling Cauldrons blow,*
You that ſcum the molten Lead.
3. *You that pinch with Red-hot Tongs;*
1. *You that drive the trembling hoſts*
Of poor, poor Ghoſts,
With your Sharpen'd Prongs;
2. *You that thruſt 'em off the Brim.*
3. *You that plunge 'em when they Swim:*
1. *Till they drown;*
Till they go
On a row
Down, down, down,
Ten thouſand thouſand, thouſand fadoms low.
Chorus. *Till they drown,* &c.
1. *Muſick for a while*
Shall your cares beguile:
Wondring how your pains were eas'd.
2. *And diſdaining to be pleas'd;*
3. *Till* Alecto *free the dead*
From their eternal bands;
Till the Snakes drop from her head,
And Whip from out her hands.
1. *Come away*
Do not ſtay,
But obey
While we play,
For Hell's broke up, and Ghoſts have holy-day.
Chorus. *Come away,* &c.

[A flaſh of Lightning: the Stage is made bright; and the Ghoſts are ſeen paſſing betwixt the Trees.

1 *Lajus!* 2 *Lajus!* 3 *Lajus!*
1 *Hear!* 2 *Hear!* 3 *Hear!*
Tir. *Hear and appear:*
By the Fates that ſpun thy thread;
Cho. *Which are three,*
Tir. *By the Furies fierce, and dread!*
Cho. *Which are three,*
Tir. *By the Judges of the dead!*
Cho. *Which are three,*
Three times three!
Tir. *By Hells blew flame:*
By the Stigian *Lake:*
And by Demogorgon's *name,*
At which Ghoſts quake,
Hear and appear.

[*The Ghoſt of* Lajus *riſes arm'd in his Chariot, as he was ſlain. And behind his Chariot, ſit the three who were Murder'd with him.*

Ghoſt of Lajus. Why haſt thou drawn me from my pains below,
To ſuffer worſe above: to ſee the day,
And *Thebes* more hated? Hell is Heav'n to *Thebes*.
For pity ſend me back, where I may hide,
In willing night, this Ignominious head:
In Hell I ſhun the publick ſcorn; and then
They hunt me for their ſport, and hoot me as I fly:
Behold ev'n now they grin at my gor'd ſide,
And chatter at my wounds.

Tir. I pity thee:
Tell but why *Thebes* is for thy death accurſt
And I'll unbind the Charm.

Ghoſt. O ſpare my ſhame.

Tir. Are theſe two innocent?

Ghoſt. Of my death they are.
But he who holds my Crown, Oh, muſt I ſpeak!
Was doom'd to do what Nature moſt abhors.
The Gods foreſaw it; and forbad his being,
Before he yet was born. I broke their Laws,
And cloath'd with fleſh his pre-exiſting Soul,
Some kinder Pow'r, too weak for deſtiny,
Took pity, and indu'd his new-form'd Maſs
With Temperance, Juſtice, Prudence, Fortitude,
And every Kingly vertue; but in vain.
For Fate, that ſent him hood-winckt to the world,
Perform'd its work by his miſtaking hands.
Asks thou who murder'd me? 'twas *Oedipus*:
Who ſtains my Bed with Inceſt? *Oedipus*:
For whom then are you curſt, but *Oedipus*!
He comes; the Parricide: I cannot bear him:
My wounds ake at him: Oh his Murd'rous breath
Venoms my aiery ſubſtance! hence with him,
Baniſh him; ſweep him out; the Plague he bears
Will blaſt your fields, and mark his way with ruine.
From *Thebes*, my Throne, my Bed, let him be driven;
Do you forbid him Earth, and I'll forbid him Heaven.

[*Ghoſt deſcends.*

Enter Oedipus, Creon, Hæmon, &c.

Oed. What's this! methought ſome peſtilential blaſt
Strook me juſt entring; and ſome unſeen hand
Struggled to puſh me backward? tell me why
My hair ſtands briſtling up, why my fleſh trembles!

You

You ſtare at me! then Hell has been among ye,
And ſome lag Fiend yet lingers in the Grove.
Tir. What Omen ſaw'ſt thou entring?
Oed. A young Stork,
That bore his aged Parent on his back;
Till weary with the weight, he ſhook him off,
And peck'd out both his Eyes.
Adr. Oh, *Oedipus!*
Eur. Oh, wretched *Oedipus!*
Tir. O! Fatal King!
Oed. What mean theſe Exclamations on my Name?
I thank the Gods, no ſecret thoughts reproach me:
No: I dare challenge Heav'n to turn me outward,
And ſhake my Soul quite empty in your ſight.
Then wonder not that I can bear unmov'd
Theſe fix'd regards, and ſilent threats of eyes:
A generous fierceneſs dwells with innocence;
And conſcious vertue is allow'd ſome pride.
Tir. Thou know'ſt not what thou ſay'ſt.
Oed. What mutters he! tell me, *Eurydice:*
Thou ſhak'ſt: thy ſoul's a Woman. Speak, *Adraſtus;*
And boldly, as thou met'ſt my Arms in fight;
Dar'ſt thou not ſpeak, why then 'tis bad indeed:
Tireſias, thee I ſummon by thy Prieſthood,
Tell me what news from Hell; where *Lajus* points,
And who's the guilty head!
Tir. Let me not anſwer.
Oed. Be dumb then, and betray thy Native ſoil
To farther Plagues.
Tir. I dare not name him to thee.
Oed. Dar'ſt thou converſe with Hell, and canſt thou fear
An humane name?
Tir. Urge me no more to tell a thing, which known
Wou'd make thee more unhappy: 'twill be found
Tho' I am ſilent.
Oed. Old and obſtinate! Then thou thy ſelf
Art Author or Accomplice of this murther,
And ſhun'ſt the Juſtice, which by publick ban
Thou haſt incurr'd.
Tir. O, if the guilt were mine
It were not half ſo great: know, wretched man,
Thou only, thou art guilty; thy own Curſe
Falls heavy on thy ſelf.
Oed. Speak this again:
But ſpeak it to the Winds when they are loudeſt:

Or to the raging Seas, they'll hear as soon,
And sooner will believe.
Tir. Then hear me Heav'n,
For blushing thou hast seen it: hear me Earth,
Whose hollow womb cou'd not contain this murder,
But sent it back to light: and thou Hell, hear me,
Whose own black Seal has 'firm'd this horrid truth,
Oedipus murther'd *Lajus*.
Oed. Rot the tongue,
And blasted be the mouth that spoke that Lye.
Thou blind of Sight, but thou more blind of Soul.
Tir. Thy Parents thought not so.
Oed. Who were my Parents?
Tir. Thou shalt know too soon.
Oed. Why seek I truth from thee?
The smiles of Courtiers, and the Harlots tears,
The Tradesmans oaths, and mourning of an Heir,
Are Truths to what Priests tell.
O why has Priest-hood priviledge to lye,
And yet to be believ'd!——thy age protects thee.——
Tir. Thou canst not kill me; 'tis not in thy Fate,
As 'twas to kill thy Father; wed thy Mother;
And beget Sons, thy Brothers.
Oed. Riddles, Riddles!
Tir. Thou art thy self a Riddle; a perplext
Obscure *Enigma*, which when thou unty'st,
Thou shalt be found and lost.
Oed. Impossible!
Adrastus, speak, and as thou art a King,
Whose Royal word is sacred, clear my Fame.
Adr. Wou'd I cou'd!
Oed. Ha, wilt thou not: can that Plebeian Vice
Of lying mount to Kings! can they be tainted!
Then Truth is lost on Earth.
Cre. The Cheat's too gross:
Adrastus is his Oracle, and he,
The pious Jugler, but *Adrastus* Organ.
Oed. 'Tis plain, the Priest's suborn'd to free the Pris'ner.
Cre. And turn the guilt on you.
Oed. O, honest *Creon*, how hast thou been bely'd?
Enr. Hear me.
Cre. She's brib'd to save her Lover's life.
Adr. If *Oedipus* thou think'st——
Cre. Hear him not speak.
Adr. Then hear these holy men.

Cre.

Cre. Priests, Priests all brib'd, all Priests.
Oed. Adrastus I have found thee.
The malice of a vanquish'd man has seiz'd thee.
Adr. If Envy and not Truth———
Oed. I'll hear no more: away with him.
[Hæmon *takes him off by force:* Creon *and* Eurydice *follow.*
To Tir. Why stand'st thou here, Impostor!
So old, and yet so wicked.—lye for gain;
And gain so short as age can promise thee!
Tir. So short a time as I have yet to live
Exceeds thy pointed hour; Remember *Lajus:*
No more; if e're we meet again, 'twill be
In mutual darkness; we shall feel before us
To reach each others hand; Remember *Lajus.*
[*Ex.* Tiresias: *Priests follow.*

Oedipus Solus.

Remember *Lajus!* that's the burden still:
Murther, and Incest! but to hear 'em nam'd
My Soul starts in me: the good Sentinel
Stands to her Weapons; takes the first Alarm
To Guard me from such Crimes.———Did I kill *Lajus?*
Then I walk'd sleeping, in some frightful dream,
My Soul then stole my Body out by night;
And brought me back to Bed e're Morning-wake.
It cannot be ev'n this remotest way,
But some dark hint would justle forward now;
And goad my memory.———Oh my *Jocasta!*

Enter Jocasta.

Joc. Why are you thus disturb'd?
Oed. Why, would'st thou think it?
No less than Murther?
Joc. Murder! what of Murder?
Oed. Is Murther then no more? add Parricide,
And incest; bear not these a frightful sound?
Joc. Alas!
Oed. How poor a pity is Alas,
For two such Crimes!———was *Lajus* us'd to lye?
Joc. Oh no: the most sincere, plain, honest man———
One who abhorr'd a lye?
Oed. Then he has got that Quality in Hell.
He charges me——but why accuse I him?

I did not hear him ſpeak it: they accuſe me;
The Prieſt, *Adraſtus*, and *Eurydice*,
Of Murdering *Lajus*——Tell me, while I think on't,
Has old *Tireſias* practis'd long this Trade?

Joc. What Trade?

Oed. Why this foretelling Trade.

Joc. For many years.

Oed. Has he before this day accus'd me?

Joc. Never.

Oed. Have you e're this inquir'd, who did this Murder?

Joc. Often; but ſtill in vain.

Oed. I am ſatisfy'd.
Then 'tis an infant-lye; but one day old.
The Oracle takes place before the Prieſt;
The blood of *Lajus* was to Murder *Lajus*:
I'm not of *Lajus*'s blood.

Joc. Ev'n Oracles
Are always doubtful, and are often forg'd:
Lajus had one, which never was fulfill'd,
Nor ever can be now!

Oed. And what foretold it?

Joc. That he ſhou'd have a Son by me, fore-doom'd
The Murderer of his Father: true indeed,
A Son was born; but, to prevent that Crime,
The wretched Infant of a guilty Fate,
Boar'd through his unry'd feet, and bound with cords,
On a bleak Mountain, naked was expos'd:
The King himſelf liv'd many, many years,
And found a different Fate; by Robbers Murder'd,
Where three ways meet: yet theſe are Oracles;
And this the Faith we owe 'em.

Oed. Say'ſt thou, Woman?
By Heav'n thou haſt awakn'd ſomewhat in me,
That ſhakes my very Soul!

Joc. What, new diſturbance!

Oed. Methought thou ſaid'ſt,—(or do I dream thou ſaid'ſt it!)
This Murder was on *Lajus* perſon done,
Where three ways meet?

Joc. So common fame reports.

Oed. Wou'd it had ly'd.

Joc. Why, good my Lord?

Oed. No queſtions:
'Tis buſie time with me; diſpatch mine firſt;
Say where, where was it done?

Joc. Mean you the Murder?

Oed.

Oed. Coud'ſt thou not anſwer without naming Murder?
Joc. They ſay in *Phocide*; on the Verge that parts it
From *Daulia*, and from *Delphos*.
Oed. So!—How long! when happen'd this?
Joc. Some little time before you came to *Thebes*.
Oed. What will the Gods do with me!
Joc. What means that thought?
Oed. Something: but 'tis not yet your turn to ask:
How old was *Lajus*, what his ſhape, his ſtature,
His action, and his meen? quick, quick, your anſwer——
Joc. Big made he was, and tall: his port was fierce,
Erect his countenance: Manly Majeſty
Sate in his front, and darted from his eyes,
Commanding all he viewed: his hair juſt grizled,
As in a green old age: bate but his years,
You are his Picture.
Oed. aſide. Pray Heav'n he drew me not? am I his Picture?
Joc. So I have often told you.
Oed. True, you have;
Add that to the reſt: how was the King
Attended when he travell'd?
Joc. By four Servants:
He went out privately.
Oed. Well counted ſtill:
One ſcap'd I hear; what ſince became of him?
Joc. When he beheld you firſt, as King in *Thebes*,
He kneel'd, and trembling beg'd I wou'd diſmiſs him:
He had my leave; and now he lives retir'd.
Oed. This Man muſt be produc'd; he muſt, *Jocaſta*.
Joc. He ſhall——yet have I leave to ask you why?
Oed. Yes, you ſhall know: for where ſhould I repoſe
The anguiſh of my Soul, but in your breaſt!
I need not tell you *Corinth* claims my birth;
My Parents *Polybus* and *Merope*,
Two Royal Names; their only Child am I.
It happen'd once, 'twas at Bridal Feaſt,
One warm with Wine, told me I was a Foundling,
Not the King's Son; I ſtung with this reproach,
Strook him: my Father, heard of it: the Man
Was made ask pardon; and the buſineſs huſh'd.
Joc. 'Twas ſomewhat odd.
Oed. And ſtrangely it perplext me.
I ſtole away to *Delphos*, and implor'd
The God, to tell my certain Parentage.
He bade me ſeek no farther:——'twas my Fate

To

To kill my Father, and pollute his Bed,
By marrying her who bore me.
Joc. Vain, vain Oracles!
Oed. But yet they frighted me;
I lookt on *Corinth* as a place accurst,
Resolv'd my Destiny should wait in vain;
And never catch me there.
Joc. Too nice a fear.
Oed. Suspend your thoughts; and flatter not too soon.
Just in the place you nam'd, where three ways meet,
And near that time, five persons I encounter'd;
One was too like, (Heav'n grant it prove not him)
Whom you describe for *Lajus*: insolent
And fierce they were, as Men who liv'd on spoil.
I judg'd 'em Robbers, and by force repell'd
The force they us'd: In short, four men I slew:
The fifth upon his knees demanding Life,
My mercy gave it——bring me comfort now,
If I slew *Lajus*, what can be more wretched!
From *Thebes* and you my Curse has banish'd me:
From *Corinth* Fate.
Joc. Perplex not thus your mind;
My husband fell by Multitudes oppress't,
So *Phorbas* said: this Band you chanc'd to meet;
And murder'd not my *Lajus*, but reveng'd him.
Oed. There's all my hope: Let *Phorbas* tell me this,
And I shall live again!——
To you, good Gods, I make my last appeal;
Or clear my Virtues or my Crime reveal:
If wandring in the maze of Fate I run,
And backward trod the paths I sought to shun,
Impute my Errours to your own Decree;
My hands are guilty, but my heart is free. [*Ex.* Ambo.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

Pyracmon, Creon.

Pyr. SOME business of import that Triumph wears
You seem to go with; nor is it hard to guess
When you are pleas'd, by a malicious joy:

Whose

Whose Red and Fiery Beams cast through your Visage
A glowing pleasure. Sure you smile revenge,
And I cou'd gladly hear.

Cre. Would'st thou believe,
This giddy hair-brain'd King, whom old *Tiresias*
Has Thunder-strook, with heavy accusation,
Tho' conscious of no inward guilt, yet fears,
He fears *Jocasta*, fears himself, his shadow;
He fears the multitude; and, which is worth
An Age of laughter, out of all mankind,
He chuses me to be his Orator:
Swears that *Adrastus*, and the lean-Look'd Prophet,
Are joint-conspirators; and wisht me to
Appease the raving *Thebans*; which I swore
To do.

Pyr. A dangerous undertaking;
Directly opposite to your own interest.

Cre. No, dull *Pyraemon*; when I left his presence,
With all the Wings with which revenge could imp
My flight, I gain'd the mid'st o'th' City;
There, standing on a Pile of dead and dying,
I to the mad and sickly multitude,
With interrupting sobs, cry'd out, O *Thebes*,
O wretched *Thebes*, thy King, thy *Oedipus*,
This barbarous stranger, this Usurper, Monster,
Is by the Oracle, the wise *Tiresias*,
Proclaim'd the murderer of thy Royal *Lajus*:
Jocasta too, no longer now my Sister,
Is found complotter in the horrid deed.
Here I renounce all tye of Blood and Nature,
For thee, O *Thebes*, dear *Thebes*, poor bleeding *Thebes!*
And there I wept, and then the Rabble howl'd,
And roar'd, and with a thousand antick mouths
Gabbled Revenge, Revenge was all the cry.

Pyr. This cannot fail: I see you on the Throne;
And *Oedipus* cast out.

Cre. Then streight came on
Alcander, with a wild and bellowing Croud,
Whom he had wrought; I whisper'd him to join,
And head the Forces while the heat was in 'em:
So to the Palace I return'd, to meet
The King, and greet him with another story.
But see, he Enters.

Enter

Enter Oedipus, Jocasta, *attended.*

Oed. Said you that *Phorbas* is return'd, and yet
Intreats he may return, without being ask'd
Of ought concerning what we have discover'd?
Joc. He started when I told him your intent,
Replying, what he knew of that affair
Would give no satisfaction to the King;
Then, falling on his knees, begg'd, as for life,
To be dismiss'd from Court: He trembled too,
As if Convulsive death had seiz'd upon him,
And stammer'd in his abrupt Pray'r so wildly,
That had he been the murderer of *Laius*,
Guilt and distraction could not have shook him more.
Oed. By your description, sure as plagues and death
Lay waste our *Thebes*, some deed that shuns the light
Begot those fears: If thou respect'st my peace,
Secure him, dear *Jocasta*; for my Genius
Shrinks at his name.
Joc. Rather let him go:
So my poor boding heart would have it be,
Without a reason.
Oed. Hark, the *Thebans* come!
Therefore retire: and, once more, if thou lov'st me,
Let *Phorbas* be retain'd.
Joc. You shall, while I
Have life, be still obey'd:
In vain you sooth me with your soft indearments,
And set the fairest Countenance to view,
Your gloomy eyes, my Lord, betray a deadness
And inward languishing: that Oracle
Eats like a subtil Worm it's venom'd way,
Preys on your heart, and rots the noble Core,
How-e're the beauteous out-side shews so lovely.
Oed. O, thou wilt kill me with thy Love's excess!
All, all is well; retire, the *Thebans* come. [*Ex.* Jocasta.
Ghost. Oedipus!
Oed. Ha! again that scream of woe!
Thrice have I heard, thrice since the morning dawn'd
It hollow'd loud, as if my Guardian Spirit
Call'd from some vaulted Mansion, *Oedipus!*
Or is it but the work of melancholly?
When the Sun sets, shadows, that shew'd at Noon
But small, appear most long and terrible;

So

So when we think Fate hovers o'ro our heads,
Our apprehensions shoot beyond all bounds,
Owls, Ravens, Crickets seem the watch of death,
Nature's worst Vermine scare her God-like Sons.
Ecchoes, the very leavings of a Voice,
Grow babling Ghosts, and call us to our Graves:
Each Mole-hill thought swells to a huge *Olympus*,
While we fantastick dreamers heave and puff,
And sweat with an Immagination's weight;
As if, like *Atlas*, with these mortal Shoulders
We could sustain the burden of the World. [*Creon comes forward.*

Cre. O, Sacred Sir, My Royal Lord——

Oed. What now?
Thou seem'st affrighted at some dreadful Action,
Thy breath comes short, thy darted eyes are fixt
On me for aid, as if thou wert pursu'd:
I sent thee to the *Thebans*, speak thy wonder;
Fear not, this Palace is a Sanctuary,
The King himself's thy Guard.

Cre. For me, alas,
My life's not worth a thought, when weigh'd with yours?
But fly, my Lord, fly as your life is sacred,
Your Fate is precious to your faithful *Creon*,
Who therefore, on his knees, thus prostrate begs
You would remove from *Thebes* that Vows your ruine.
When I but offer'd at your innocence,
They gather'd Stones, and menac'd me with Death,
And drove me through the Streets with imprecations
Against your sacred Person, and those Traytors
Which justify'd your Guilt: which curs'd *Tiresias*
Told, as from Heav'n, was cause of their destruction,

Oed. Rise, worthy *Creon*, haste and take our Guard,
Rank 'em in equal part upon the Square,
Then open every Gate of this our Palace,
And let the Torrent in. Hark, it comes, [*Shout.*
I hear 'em roar: begon, and break down all
The dams that would oppose their furious passage.

[*Ex.* Creon, *with Guards.*

Enter Adrastus, *his Sword drawn.*

Adr. Your City
Is all in Arms, all bent to your destruction:
I heard but now, where I was close confin'd,
A Thundring shout, which made my Jaylors vanish,

Cry, Fire the Palace; where's the Cruel King?
Yet, by th' Infernal Gods, those awful Pow'rs
That have accus'd you, which these ears have heard,
And these eyes seen, I must believe you guiltless;
For, since I knew the Royal *Oedipus*,
I have observ'd in all his acts such truth
And God-like clearness, that to the last gust
Of Blood and Spirits, I'll defend his life,
And here have Sworn to perish by his side.

Oed. Be witness, Gods, how near this touches me, [*Embracing him.*
O what, what recompence can glory make?

Adr. Defend your innocence, speak like your self,
And awe the Rebels with your dauntless virtue.
But, hark! the storm comes nearer.

Oed. Let it come.
The force of Majesty is never known
But in a general wrack: Then, then is seen
The difference 'twixt a Threshold and a Throne.

Enter Creon, Pyracmon, Alcander, Tiresias, Thebans.

Alc. Where, where's this cruel King? *Thebans*, behold
There stands your Plague, the ruine, defolation
Of this unhappy———speak; shall I kill him?
Or shall he be cast out to Banishment?

All Theb. To banishment, away with him.

Oed. Hence, you Barbarians, to your slavish distance;
Fix to the Earth your sordid looks; for he
Who stirs, dares more than mad-men, fiends, or Furies;
Who dares to face me, by the Gods, as well
May brave the Majesty of thundring *Jove*.
Did I for this relieve you when besieg'd
By this fierce Prince, when coop'd within your Walls,
And to the very brink of Fate reduc'd;
When lean-jaw'd Famine made more havock of you
Than does the Plague? But I rejoyce I know you,
Know the base stuff that temper'd your vile Souls:
The Gods be prais'd, I needed not your Empire,
Born to a greater, nobler, of my own;
Nor shall the Scepter of the Earth now win me
To rule such Brutes, so barbarous a People.

Adr. Methinks, my Lord, I see a sad repentance,
A general consternation spread among 'em.

Oed. My Reign is at an end; yet ere I finish——
I'll do a Justice that becomes a Monarch,
A Monarch, who, i'th' midst of Swords and Javelins,

Dares

Dares act as on his Throne encompaſt round
With Nations for his Guard. *Alcander*, you
Are nobly born, therefore ſhall loſe your head: [*Seizes him.*
Here, *Hæmon*, take him: but for this, and this,
Let cords diſpatch 'em. Hence, away with 'em.

Tir. O ſacred Prince, pardon diſtracted *Thebes*,
Pardon her, if ſhe acts by Heav'n's award;
If that th' Infernal Spirits have declar'd
The depth of Fate, and if our Oracles
May ſpeak, O do not too ſeverely deal,
But let thy wretched *Thebes* at leaſt complain:
If thou art guilty, Heav'n will make it known;
If innocent, then let *Tireſias* dye.

Oed. I take thee at thy word. Run, haſte, and ſave *Alcander*:
I ſwear the Prophet, or the King ſhall dye.
Be witneſs, all you *Thebans*, of my Oath.
And *Phorbas* be the Umpire.

Tir. I ſubmit. [*Trumpets ſound.*

Oed. What mean thoſe Trumpets?

Hæm. From your Native Country,

Enter Hæmon *with* Alcander, *&c.*

Great Sir, the fam'd *Ægeon* is arriv'd,
That renown'd Favourite of the King your Father:
He comes as an Ambaſſadour from *Corinth*,
And ſues for Audience.

Oed. Haſte, *Hæmon*, flye, and tell him that I burn
T' embrace him.

Hæm. The Queen, my Lord, at preſent holds him
In private Conference; but behold her here.

Enter Jocaſta, Eurydice, *&c.*

Joc. Hail, happy *Oedipus*, happieſt of Kings?
Henceforth be bleſt, bleſt as thou canſt deſire,
Sleep without fears the blackeſt nights away;
Let Furies haunt thy Palace, thou ſhalt ſleep
Secure, thy ſlumbers ſhall be ſoft and gentle
As Infants dreams.

Oed. What does the Soul of all my joys intend?
And whither would this rapture?

Joc. O, I could rave,
Pull down thoſe lying Fanes, and burn that Vault,

From

From whence resounded those false Oracles,
That robb'd my Love of rest: if we must pray,
Rear in the streets bright Altars to the Gods,
Let Virgins hands adorn the Sacrifice;
And not a gray-beard forging Priest come near,
To pry into the bowels of the Victim,
And with his dotage mad the gaping World.
But see, the Oracle that I will trust,
True as the Gods, and affable as Men.

Enter Ægeon, *Kneels.*

Oed. O, to my arms, welcome, my dear *Ægeon*;
Ten thousand welcomes, O, my Foster-Father,
Welcome as mercy to a Man condemn'd!
Welcome to me,
As, to a sinking Marriner,
The lucky Plank that bears him to the shore!
But speak, O tell me what so mighty joy
Is this thou bring'st, which so transports *Jocasta*?

Joc. Peace, peace, *Ægeon*; let *Jocasta* tell him:
O that I could for ever Charm, as now,
My dearest *Oedipus*: Thy Royal Father,
Polybus, King of *Corinth*, is no more.

Oed. Ha! can it be? *Ægeon*, answer me,
And speak in short, what my *Jocasta*'s transport
May over-do.

Æge. Since in few words, my Royal Lord, you ask
To know the truth; King *Polybus* is dead.

Oed. O all you Pow'rs, is't possible? what, dead!
But that the Tempest of my joy may rise
By just degrees, and hit at last the Stars:
Say, how, how dy'd he? Ha! by Sword, by Fire,
Or Water? by Assassinates, or Poyson? speak:
Or did he languish under some disease?

Æge. Of no distemper, of no blast he dy'd,
But fell like Autumn-Fruit that mellow'd long:
Ev'n wonder'd at, because he dropt no sooner.
Fate seem'd to wind him up for fourscore years;
Yet freshly ran he on ten Winters more:
Till, like a Clock worn out with eating time,
The Wheels of weary life at last stood still.

Oed. O, let me press thee in my youthful arms,
And smother thy old age in my embraces.
Yes *Thebans*, yes *Jocasta*, yes *Adrastus*,

Old

Old *Polybus*, the King my Father's dead.
Fires ſhall be kindled in the midſt of *Thebes*;
I'th' midſt of Tumults, Wars, and Peſtilence,
I will rejoice for *Polybus* his death.
Know, be it known to the limits of the World;
Yet farther, let it paſs yon dazling roof,
The manſion of the Gods, and ſtrike 'em deaf
With everlaſting peals of Thundring joy.

Tir. Fate! Nature! Fortune! what is all this world?

Oed. Now, Dotard; now, thou blind old wizard Prophet,
Where are your boding Ghoſts, your Altars now;
Your Birds of knowledge, that, in dusky Air,
Chatter Futurity; and where are now
Your Oracles, that call'd me Parricide?
Is he not dead? deep laid in's Monument?
And was not I in *Thebes* when Fate attack'd him?
Avant, begon, you Vizors of the Gods!
Were I as other Sons, now I ſhould weep;
But as I am, I've reaſon to rejoice:
And will, tho' his cold ſhade ſhould riſe and blaſt me.
O, for this death, let Waters break their bounds,
Rocks, Valleys, Hills, with ſplitting *Io*'s ring:
Io, *Jocaſta*, *Io pæan* ſing.

Tir. Who would not now conclude a happy end?
But all Fate's turns are ſwift and unexpected.

Æge. Your Royal Mother *Merope*, as if
She had no Soul ſince you forſook the Land,
Waves all the neighb'ring Princes that adore her.

Oed. Waves all the Princes! poor heart! for what? O ſpeak.

Æge. She, tho' in full-blown flow'r of glorious beauty,
Grows cold, ev'n in the Summer of her Age:
And, for your ſake, has ſworn to dye unmarry'd.

Oed. How! for my ſake, dye, and not marry! O,
My fit returns.

Æge. This Diamond, with a thouſand kiſſes bleſt,
With thouſand ſighs and wiſhes for your ſafety,
She charg'd me give you, with the general homage
Of our *Corinthian* Lords.

Oed. There's Magick in it, take it from my ſight;
There's not a beam it darts, but carries Hell,
Hot flaſhing luſt, and Necromantick Inceſt:
Take it from theſe ſick eyes, Oh hide it from me.
No, my *Jocaſta*, tho' *Thebes* caſt me out,

While

VVhile *Merope*'s alive, I'll ne're return!
O, rather let me walk round the wide VVorld
A beggar, than accept a Diadem
On ſuch abhorr'd conditions.

Joc. You make, my Lord, your own unhappineſs,
By theſe extravagant and needleſs fears.

Oed. Needleſs! O, all you Gods! By Heav'n I'd rather
Embrue my arms up to my very ſhoulders
In the dear entrails of the beſt of Fathers,
Than offer at the execrable act
Of damned Inceſt: therefore no more of her.

Æge. And why, O ſacred Sir, if Subjects may
Preſume to look into their Monarch's breaſt,
VVhy ſhould the chaſt and ſpotleſs *Merope*
Infuſe ſuch thoughts as I muſt bluſh to name?

Oed. Becauſe the God of *Delphos* did forewarn me,
VVith Thundring Oracles.

Æge. May I intreat to know 'em?

Oed. Yes, my *Ægeon*; but the ſad remembrance
Quite blaſts my Soul: ſee then the ſwelling Prieſt!
Methinks I have his Image now in view;
He mounts the *Tripos* in a minutes ſpace,
His clouded head knocks at the Temple roof,
VVhile from his mouth
Theſe diſmal words are heard:
" Fly, wretch, whom Fate has doom'd thy Fathers blood to ſpill,
" And with prepoſtrous Births thy Mothers womb to fill.

Æge. Is this the Cauſe
VVhy you refuſe the Diadem of *Corinth*?

Oed. The Cauſe! why, is it not a monſtrous one?

Æge. Great Sir, you may return; and tho' you ſhould
Enjoy the Queen (which all the Gods forbid)
The Act would prove no inceſt.

Oed. How, *Ægeon*?
Tho' I enjoy'd my Mother, not inceſtuous!
Thou rav'ſt, and ſo do I; and theſe all catch
My madneſs; look, they're dead with deep diſtraction;
Not Inceſt! what, not Inceſt with my Mother?

Æge. My Lord, Queen *Merope* is not your Mother.

Oed. Ha! did I hear thee right? not *Merope*
My Mother!

Æge. Nor was *Polybus* your Father.

Oed. Then all my days and nights muſt now be ſpent
In curious ſearch, to find out thoſe dark Parents
VVho gave me to the VVorld; ſpeak then *Ægeon*,
'gy all the Gods Celeſtial and Infernal,

By

By all the tyes of Nature, blood and friendſhip,
Conceal not from this rack'd deſpairing King
A point or ſmalleſt grain of what thou know'ſt;
Speak then, O anſwer to my doubts directly.
If Royal *Polybus* was not my Father,
VVhy was I call'd his Son?

Æge. He, from my Arms,
Receiv'd you as the faireſt Gift of Nature.
Not but you were adorn'd with all the Riches
That Empire could beſtow in coſtly Mantles
Upon it's Infant Heir.

Oed. But was I made the Heir of *Corinth*'s Crown,
Becauſe *Ægeon*'s hands preſented me?

Æge. By my adviſe,
Being paſt all hope of Children,
He took, embrac'd, and own'd you for his Son.

Oed. Perhaps I then am yours; inſtruct me, Sir;
If it be ſo, I'll kneel and weep before you,
VVith all th' obedience of a penitent Child,
Imploring pardon.
Kill me if you pleaſe,
I will not writhe my Body at the wound:
But ſink upon your feet with a laſt ſigh,
And ask forgiveneſs with my dying hands.

Æge. O riſe, and call not to this aged Cheek
The little blood which ſhould keep warm my heart;
You are not mine, nor ought I to be bleſt
VVith ſuch a God-like off-ſpring, Sir, I found you
Upon the Mount *Citheron*.

Oed. O ſpeak, go on, the Air grows ſenſible
Of the great things you utter, and is calm:
The hurry'd Orbs, with Storms ſo Rack'd of late,
Seem to ſtand ſtill, as if that *Jove* were talking.
Citharon! ſpeak, the Vally of *Citharon*!

Æge. Oft-times before I thither did reſort,
Charm'd with the converſation of a man
VVho led a Rural life, and had command
O're all the Shepherds who about thoſe Vales
Tended their numerous Flocks: in this man's Arms
I ſaw you ſmiling at a fatal Dagger
VVhoſe point he often offer'd at your throat;
But then you ſmil'd, and then he drew it back;
Then lifted it again, you ſmil'd again;
Till he at laſt in fury threw it from him.

And cry'd aloud, the Gods forbid thy death.
Then I ruſh'd in, and, after ſome diſcourſe,
To me he did bequeath your innocent life;
And I, the welcome care to *Polybus*.

Oed. To whom belongs the Maſter of the Shepherds?

Æge. His name I knew not, or I have forgot,
That he was of the Family of *Lajus*,
I well remember.

Oed. And is your Friend alive? for if he be
I'll buy his preſence, tho' it coſt my Crown.

Æge. your Menial Attendants beſt can tell
Whether he lives, or not; and who has now
His place.

Joc. Winds bear me to ſome barren Iſland,
Where print of humane Feet was never ſeen,
O're-grown with Weeds of ſuch a monſtrous height,
Their baleful tops are waſh'd with bellying Clouds;
Beneath whoſe venomous ſhade I may have vent
For horrors that would blaſt the Barbarous World.

Oed. If there be any here that knows the perſon
Whom he diſcrib'd, I charge him on his life
To ſpeak; concealment ſhall be ſudden death:
But he who brings him forth, ſhall have reward
Beyond Ambition's luſt.

Tyr. His name is *Phorbas*:
Jocaſta knows him well; but if I may
Adviſe, Reſt where you are, and ſeek no farther.

Oed. Then all goes well, Since *Phorbas* is ſecur'd
By my *Jocaſta*. Haſte, and bring him forth:
My Love, my Queen, give Orders. Ha! what means
Theſe Tears and Groans, and Struglings? ſpeak my Fair,
What are thy troubles?

Joc. Yours; and yours are mine:
Let me Conjure you take the Prophets Councel,
And let this *Phorbas* go.

Oed. Not for the World.
By all the Gods, I'll know my birth, tho' death
Attends the ſearch: I have already paſt
The middle of the Stream; and to return
Seems greater labour, than to venture o're.
Therefore produce him.

Joc. Once more, by the Gods,
I beg, my *Oedipus*, My Lord, my Life,
My love, my all, my only utmoſt hope,

I beg you baniſh *Phorbas:* O, the Gods,
I kneel, that you may grant this firſt requeſt.
Deny me all things elſe; but, for my ſake,
And as you prize your own eternal quiet,
Never let *Phorbas* come into your preſence.
Oed. You muſt be rais'd, and *Phorbas* ſhall appear,
Tho' his dread eyes were *Baſaliſks*: Guards, haſte,
Search the Queens Lodgings; find and force him hither.
[*Exeunt Guards.*
Joc. O, *Oedipus*, yet ſend,
And ſtop their entrance, e're it be too late:
Unleſs you wiſh to ſee *Jocaſta* rent
With Furies, ſlain out-right with meer diſtraction,
Keep from your eyes and mine the dreadful *Phorbas*.
Forbear this ſearch, I'll think you more than mortal:
Will you yet hear me?
Oed. Tempeſts will be heard,
And Waves will daſh, tho Rocks their baſis keep.——
But ſee, they Enter. If thou truly lov'ſt me,
Either forbear this ſubject, or retire.

Enter Hæmon, *Guards, with* Phorbas.

Joc. Prepare then, wretched Prince, prepare to hear
A ſtory, that ſhall turn thee into Stone,
Could there be hew'n a monſtrous Gap in Nature,
A flaw made through the Center, by ſome God,
Through which the groans of Ghoſts might ſtrike thy ears,
They would not wound thee, as this Story will.
Hark, hark! a hollow Voice calls out aloud,
Jocaſta: yes, I'll to the Royal Bed,
Where firſt the Myſteries of our loves were acted,
And double dye it with imperial Crimſon;
Tear off this curling hair,
Be gorg'd with Fire, ſtab every vital part,
And, when at laſt I'm ſlain, to Crown the horrour, [*Ex.*
My poor tormented Ghoſt ſhall cleave the ground,
To try if Hell can yet more deeply wound.
Oed. She's gone; and as ſhe went, methought her eyes
Grew larger, while a thouſand frantick Spirits
Seething, like riſing bubbles, on the brim,
Peep'd from the VVatry brink, and glow'd upon me.
I'll ſeek no more; but huſh my Genious up
That throws me on my Fate.——Impoſſible!

O wretched Man, whose too too busy thoughts
Ride swifter than the galloping Heav'ns round,
With an eternal hurry of the Soul!
Nay there's a time when ev'n the rowling year
Seems to stand still, dead Calms are in the Ocean,
When not a breath disturbs the drowzy Waves:
But Man, the very Monster of the World,
Is ne're at rest, the Soul for ever wakes.
Come then, since Destiny thus drives us on,
Let's know the bottom. *Hamon*, you I sent:
Where is that *Phorbas?*

Ham. Here, my Royal Lord.

Oed. Speak first, *Ægeon*, say, is this the Man?

Æge. My Lord it is: Tho' time has plough'd that face
With many furrows since I saw it first;
Yet I'm too well acquainted with the ground, quite to forget it.

Oed. Peace; stand back a while.
Come hither Friend; I hear thy name is *Phorbas.*
Why dost thou turn thy face? I charge thee answer
To what I shall enquire: Wert thou not once
The Servant of King *Lajus* here in *Thebes?*

Phor. I was, great Sir, his true and faithful Servant;
Born and bred up in Court, no forreign Slave.

Oed. What Office hadst thou? what was thy Employment?

Phor. He made me Lord of all his Rural Pleasures;
For much he lov'd 'em: oft I entertain'd
With sporting *Swains*, o're whom I had command.

Oed. Where was thy Residence? to what part o'th Country
Didst thou most frequently resort?

Phor. To Mount *Citheron*, and the pleasant Vallies
Which all about lye shadowing it's large feet.

Oed. Come forth *Ægeon.* Ha! why startst thou, *Phorbas?*
Forward, I say, and Face to Face confront him;
Look wistly on him, through him if thou can'st,
And tell me on thy life, say, dost thou know him?
Did'st thou e're see him? converse with him
Near Mount *Citheron?*

Phor. Who, my Lord, this man?

Oed. This Man, this old, this venerable Man:
Speak, didst thou ever meet him there?

Phor. Where, sacred Sir?

Oed. Near Mount *Citheron*; answer to the purpose:
'Tis a King speaks; and Royal minutes are
Of much more worth than thousand Vulgar years.

Did'st

Did'ſt thou e're ſee this Man near Mount *Citharon*?
Phor. Moſt ſure, my Lord, I have ſeen lines like thoſe
His Viſage bears; but know not where nor when.
Æge. Is't poſſible you ſhould forget your ancient Friend?
There are Perhaps
Particulars, which may excite your dead remembrance.
Have you forgot I took an Infant from you,
Doom'd to be murder'd in that gloomy Vale?
The ſwadling-bands were Purple, wrought with Gold,
Have you forgot too how you wept and begg'd
That I ſhould breed him up, and ask no more?
Phor. What-e're I begg'd; thou, like a Dotard, ſpeak'ſt
More than is requiſite: and what of this?
Why is it mention'd now? and why, O why
Doſt thou betray the Secrets of thy Friend?
Æge. Be not too raſh. That Infant grew at laſt
A King: and here the happy Monarch ſtands.
Phor. Ha! whither would'ſt thou? O what haſt thou utter'd!
For what thou haſt ſaid, Death ſtrike thee dumb for ever.
Oed. Forbear to Curſe the innocent; and be
Accurſt thy ſelf, thou ſhifting Traytor, Villain,
Damn'd Hypocrite, equivocating Slave.
Phor. O Heav'ns! wherein, my Lord, have I offended?
Oed. Why ſpeak you not according to my charge?
Bring forth the Rack: ſince mildneſs cannot win you,
Torments ſhall force.
Phor. Hold, hold, O dreadful Sir;
You will not Rack an innocent old man.
Oed. Speak then.
Phor. Alas, what would you have me ſay?
Oed. Did this old man take from your Arms an Infant?
Phor. He did: And, Oh! I wiſh to all the Gods,
Phorbas had periſh'd in that very moment.
Oed. Moment! Thou ſhalt be hours, days, years a dying.
Here, bind his hands; he dallies with my fury:
But I ſhall find a way——
Phor. My Lord, I ſaid
I gave the Infant to him.
Oed. Was he thy own, or given thee by another?
Phor. He was not mine; but given me by another.
Oed. Whence? and from whom? what City? of what Houſe?
Phor. O, Royal Sir, I bow me to the ground,
Would I could ſink beneath it: by the Gods,
I do Conjure you to inquire no more.

Oed.

Oed. Furies and Hell! *Hamon*, bring forth the Rack;
Fetch hither Cords, and Knives, and Sulphurous flames:
He ſhall be bound, and gaſh'd, his skin flead off,
And burnt alive.

Phor. O ſpare my age.

Oed. Riſe then, and ſpeak.

Phor. Dread Sir, I will.

Oed. Who gave that Infant to thee?

Phor. One of King *Lajus* Family.

Oed. O, you immortal Gods! but ſay, who was't?
Which of the Family of *Lajus* gave it?
A Servant; or one of the Royal-blood?

Phor. O Wretched State! I dye, unleſs I ſpeak;
And, if I ſpeak, moſt certain death attends me!

Oed. Thou ſhalt not dye. Speak then, who was it? ſpeak,
While I have ſenſe to underſtand the horrour;
For I grow cold.

Phor. The Queeen *Jocaſta* told me
It was her Son by *Lajus*.

Oed. O you Gods!—But did ſhe give it thee?

Phor. My Lord, ſhe did.

Oed. Wherefore? for what?—O break not yet, my heart;
Tho' my eyes burſt, no matter: wilt thou tell me,
Or muſt I ask for ever? for what end?
Why gave ſhe thee her Child?

Phor. To murder it.

Oed. O more than ſavage! murder her own bowels!
Without a Cauſe!

Phor. There was a dreadful one,
Which had foretold, that moſt unhappy Son
Should kill his Father, and enjoy his Mother.

Oed. But, one thing more,
Jocaſta told me thou wert by the Chariot
When the old King was ſlain: Speak, I conjure thee,
For I ſhall never ask thee ought again,
What was the number of th' Aſſaſſinates?

Phor. The dreadful deed was acted but by one;
And ſure that one had much of your reſemblance.

Oed. 'Tis well! I thank you, Gods! 'tis wondrous well!
Daggers, and Poyſon; O there is no need
For my diſpatch; and you, you mercileſs Pow'rs,
Hoord up your Thunder-ſtones; keep, keep your Bolts
For Crimes of little note. [*Falls.*

Adr. Help, *Hamon*, help, and bow him gently forward;

Chaſe,

Chafe, chafe his Temples: how the mighty Spirits,
Half ſtrangled with the damp his ſorrows rais'd,
Struggle for vent: but ſee, he breathes again,
And vigorous Nature breaks through all oppoſition.
How fares my Royal Friend?

Oed. The worſe for you.
O barbarous men, and oh the hated light,
Why did you force me back to curſe the day;
To curſe my friends; to blaſt with this dark breath
The yet untainted Earth and circling Air?
To raiſe new Plagues, and call new Vengeance down,
Why did you tempt the Gods, and dare to touch me?
Methinks there's not a hand that graſps this Hell
But ſhould run up like Flax all blazing fire.
Stand from this ſpot, I wiſh you as my friends,
And come not near me, leſt the gaping Earth
Swallow you too——Lo, I am gone already.

[*Draws, and claps his Sword to his breaſt, which* Adraſtus *ſtrikes away with his foot.*

Adr. You ſhall no more be truſted with your life:
Creon, Alcander, Hamon, help to hold him.

Oed. Cruel *Adraſtus*! wilt thou, *Hamon,* too?
Are theſe the Obligations of my Friends?
O worſe than worſt of my moſt barbarous Foes!
Dear, dear *Adraſtus,* look with halfe an eye
On my unheard-of Woes, and judge thy ſelf,
If it be fit that ſuch a Wretch ſhould live!
O, by theſe melting Eyes, unus'd to weep,
With all the low ſubmiſſions of a Slave,
I do conjure thee give my horrours way;
Talk not of life, for that will make me rave:
As well thou may'ſt adviſe a tortur'd wretch,
All mangled o're from head to foot with wounds,
And his bones broke, to wait a better day.

Adr. My Lord, you ask me things impoſſible;
And I with juſtice ſhould be thought your Foe,
To leave you in this Tempeſt of your Soul.

Tir. Tho' baniſh'd *Thebes,* in *Corinth* you may Reign;
Th' Infernal Pow'rs themſelves exact no more:
Calm then your rage, and once more ſeek the Gods.

Oed. I'll have no more to do with Gods, nor Men:
Hence from my Arms, avant. Enjoy thy Mother!

What:

What, violate, with Bestial appetite
The sacred Veils that wraps thee yet unborn,
This is not to be born! Hence, off, I say;
For they who let my Vengeance make themselves
Accomplices in my most horrid guilt.

Adr. Let it be so; we'll fence Heav'ns fury from you,
And suffer all together: This perhaps,
When ruine comes, may help to break your fall.

Oed. O that, as oft I have at *Athens* seen
The Stage arise, and the big Clouds descend;
So now in very deed I might behold
The pond'rous Earth, and all yon marble Roof
Meet, like the hands of *Jove*, and crush Mankind:
For all the Elements, and all the Pow'rs
Celestial, nay, Terrestrial and Infernal,
Conspire the rack of out-cast *Oedipus*.
Fall darkness then, and everlasting night
Shadow the Globe; may the Sun never dawn,
The Silver Moon be blotted from her Orb;
And for an Universal rout of Nature
Through all the inmost Chambers of the Sky,
May there not be a glimpse, one Starry spark,
But Gods meet Gods, and justle in the dark,
That jars may rise, and wrath Divine be hurl'd,
Which may to Atoms shake the solid VVorld. [*Exeunt.*

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

Creon, Alcander, Pyracmon.

Cre. *THEBES* is at length my own; and all my wishes,
Which sure were great as Royalty e're form'd,
Fortune and my auspicious Stars have Crown'd.
O Diadem, thou Center of ambition,
Where all it's different Lines are reconcil'd,
As if thou wert the burning-glass of Glory!
Pyr. Might I be Counsellor, I wou'd intreat you
To cool a little, Sir;
Find out *Eurydice*;
And, with the resolution of a man
Mark'd out for Greatness, give the fatal Choice
Of death or marriage.
Alc. Survey curs'd *Oedipus*,
As one who, tho' unfortunate, 's belov'd,
Thought innocent, and therefore much lamented
By all the *Thebans*; you must mark him dead:
Since nothing but his death, not banishment,
Can give assurance to your doubtful Reign.
Cre. Well have you done, to snatch me from the storm
Of racking Transport, where the little streams
Of Love, Revenge, and all the under passions,
As waters are by sucking Whirl-pools drawn,
VVere quite devour'd in the vast Gulph of Empire:
Therefore, *Pyracmon*, as you boldly urg'd,
Eurydice shall dye, or be my Bride.
Alcander, Summon to their Master's aid
My Menial Servants, and all those whom change
Of State, and hope of the new Monarch's favour,
Can win to take our part: Away. VVhat now? [*Ex.* Alcander.

Enter Hæmon.

VVhen *Hæmon* weeps, without the help of Ghosts,
I may foretell there is a fatal Cause.
Hæm. Is't possible you should be ignorant
Of what has happen'd to the desperate King?

Cre. I know no more, but that he was conducted
Into his Cloſet, where I ſaw him fling
His trembling Body on the Royal Bed;
All left him there, at his deſire, alone:
But ſure no ill, unleſs he dy'd with grief,
Could happen, for you bore his Sword away.
Ham. I did; and, having lock'd the door, I ſtood;
And through a chink I found, not only heard,
But ſaw him, when he thought no eye beheld him:
At firſt, deep ſighs heav'd from his woful heart,
Murmurs, and groans, that ſhook the outward Rooms,
And art thou ſtill alive, Oh wretch! he cry'd?
Then groan'd again, as if his ſorrowful Soul
Had crack'd the ſtrings of Life, and burſt away.
Cre. I weep, to hear; how then ſhould I have griev'd
Had I beheld this wondrous heap of Sorrow!
But, to the fatal period.
Ham. Thrice he ſtruck,
With all his force, his hollow groaning breaſt,
And thus, with out-cries, to himſelf complain'd.
But thou canſt weep then, and thou think'ſt 'tis well,
Theſe bubbles of the ſhalloweſt emptieſt ſorrow,
VVhich Children vent for toys, and VVomen rain
For any Trifle their fond hearts are ſet on;
Yet theſe thou think'ſt are ample ſatisfaction
For bloudieſt Murder, and for burning luſt:
No, Parricide; if thou muſt weep, weep bloud;
VVeep Eyes, inſtead of Tears: O, by the Gods,
'Tis greatly thought, he cry'd, and fits my woes.
VVhich ſaid, he ſmil'd revengefully, and leapt
Upon the floor; thence gazing at the Skies,
His Eye-balls fiery Red, and glowing vengeance;
Gods, I accuſe you not, tho' I no more
Will view your Heav'n, till with more durable glaſſes,
The mighty Souls immortal Perſpectives,
I find your dazling Beings: Take, he cry'd,
Take, Eyes, your laſt, your fatal farewell-view.
VVhen with a groan, that ſeem'd the call of Death,
VVith horrid force lifting his impious hands,
He ſnatch'd, he tore, from forth their bloody Orbs,
The Balls of ſight, and daſh'd 'em on the ground.
Cre. A Maſter-piece of horrour; new and dreadful!
Ham. I ran to ſuccour him; but, oh! too late;
For he had pluck'd the remnant ſtrings away.

VVhat

What then remains, but that I find *Tireſias*,
Who, with his Wiſdom, may allay thoſe Furies
That haunt his gloomy Soul? [*Ex.*
Cre. Heav'n will reward
Thy care; moſt honeſt, faithful, fooliſh *Hæmon*!
But ſee, *Alcander* enters, well attended.

Enter Alcander, *attended.*

I ſee thou haſt been diligent.
Alc. Nothing theſe,
For Number, to the Crouds that ſoon will follow;
Be reſolute,
And call your utmoſt Fury to revenge.
Cre. Ha! thou haſt given
Th' Alarm to Cruelty; and never may
Theſe eyes be clos'd, till they behold *Adraſtus*
Stretch'd at the feet of falſe *Eurydice*.
But ſee, they're here! retire a while, and mark.

Enter Adraſtus, Eurydice, *attended.*

Adr. Alas, *Eurydice*, what fond raſh man,
What inconſiderate and ambitious Fool,
That ſhall hereafter read the Fate of *Oedipus*,
Will dare, with his frail hand, to graſp a Scepter?
Eur. 'Tis true, a Crown ſeems dreadful, and I wiſh
That you and I, more lowly plac'd, might paſs
Our ſofter hours in humble Cells away:
Not but I love you to that Infinite height,
I could (O wondrous proof of fierceſt Love!)
Be greatly wretched in a Court with you.
Adr. Take then this moſt lov'd innocence away;
Fly from tumultuous *Thebes*,
From blood and Murder,
Fly from the Author of all Villanies,
Rapes, Death, and Treaſon, from that Fury *Creon*:
Vouchſafe that *I*, o're-joy'd, may bear you hence,
And at your Feet preſent the Crown of *Argos*.

Creon *and Attendants come up to him.*

Cre. I have o're-heard thy black deſign, *Adraſtus*.
And therefore, as a Traytor to this State,

Death ought to be thy Lot: let it ſuffice
That *Thebes* ſurveys thee as a Prince; abuſe not
Her proffer'd mercy, but retire betimes,
Leſt ſhe repent and haſten on thy Doom.
Adr. Think not, moſt abject,
Moſt abhor'd of Men,
Adraſtus will vouchſafe to anſwer thee;
Thebans, to you I juſtifie my Love:
I have addreſs'd my Prayers to this fair Princeſs;
But, if I ever meant a violence,
Or thought to Raviſh, as that Traytor did,
What humbleſt Adorations could not win;
Brand me, you Gods, blot me with foul diſhonour,
And let men Curſe me by the name of *Creon*.
Eur. Hear me, O *Thebans*, if you dread the wrath
Of her whom Fate ordain'd to be your Queen,
Hear me, and dare not, as you prize your lives,
To take the part of that Rebellious Traytor.
By the Decree of Royal *Oedipus*,
By Queen *Jocaſta*'s order, by what's more,
My own dear Vows of everlaſting Love,
I here reſign to Prince *Adraſtus* Arms
All that the World can make me Miſtriſs of.
Cre. O perjur'd Woman!
Draw all; and when I give the word, fall on.
Traytor, reſign the Princeſs, or this moment
Expect, with all thoſe moſt unfortunate wretches,
Upon this ſpot ſtraight to be hewn in pieces.
Adr. No, Villain, no;
With twice thoſe odds of men,
I doubt not in this Cauſe
To vanquiſh thee.
Captain, remember to your care I give
My Love; ten thouſand thouſand times more dear
Than Life, or Liberty.
Cre. Fall on, *Alcander*.
Pyracmon, you and I muſt wheel about
For nobler Game, the Princeſs.
Adr. Ah, Traytor, doſt thou ſhun me?
Follow, follow,
My brave Companions; ſee, the Cowards fly.

[*Ex. fighting*: Creon's *Party beaten off by* Adraſtus.

Enter

Enter Oedipus.

Oed. O, 'tis too little this, thy loſs of ſight,
What has it done? I ſhall be gaz'd at now
The more; be pointed at, There goes the Monſter!
Nor have I hid my horrours from my ſelf;
For tho' corporeal light be loſt for ever,
The bright reflecting Soul, through glaring Opticks,
Preſents in larger ſize her black Idea's,
Doubling the bloody proſpect of my Crimes:
Holds Fancy down, and makes her act again,
With Wife and Mother, Tortures, Hell, and Furies.
Ha! now the baleful off-ſpring's brought to light!
In horrid form they ranck themſelves before me;
What ſhall I call this Medley of Creation?
Here one, with all th' obedience of a Son,
Borrowing *Jocaſta*'s look, kneels at my Feet,
And calls me Father, there a ſturdy Boy,
Reſembling *Lajus* juſt as when I kill'd him,
Bears up, and with his cold hand graſping mine,
Cries out, How fares my Brother *Oedipus*?
What, Sons and Brothers! Siſters and Daughters too!
Fly all, begon, fly from my whirling brain;
Hence, Inceſt, Murder; hence, you ghaſtly figures!
O Gods! Gods, anſwer; is there any mean?
Let me go mad, or dye.

Enter Jocaſta.

Joc. Where, where is this moſt wretched of mankind,
This ſtately Image of Imperial Sorrow,
Whoſe ſtory told, whoſe very name but mention'd,
Would cool the rage of Feavers, and unlock
The hand of Luſt from the pail Virgin's hair,
And throw the Raviſher before her feet?
Oed. By all my fears, I think *Jocaſta*'s Voice!
Hence; fly; begon: O thou far worſe than worſt
Of damning Charmers! O abhor'd, loath'd Creature!
Fly, by the Gods, or by the Fiends, I charge thee.
Far as the Eaſt, Weſt, North, or South of Heav'n;
But think not thou ſhalt ever enter there:
The golden Gates are barr'd with Adamant,
Gainſt thee, and me; and the Celeſtial Guards,

Still

Still as we riſe, will daſh our Spirits down.
Joc. O wretched Pair! O greatly wretched we!
Two Worlds of woe!
Oed. art thou not gone then? ha!
How dar'ſt thou ſtand the Fury of the Gods?
Or com'ſt thou in the Grave to reap new pleaſures?
Joc. Talk on: till thou mak'ſt mad my rowling brain;
Groan ſtill more Death; and may thoſe diſmal ſources
Still bubble on, and pour forth blood and tears.
Methinks at ſuch a meeting, Heav'n ſtands ſtill;
The Sea nor Ebbs, nor Flows: this Mole-hill Earth
Is heav'd no more: the buſie Emmets ceaſe;
Yet hear me on———
Oed. Speak then, and blaſt my Soul.
Joc. O, my lov'd Lord, tho' I reſolve a Ruine
To match my Crimes; by all my miſeries,
'Tis horrour, worſe than thouſand thouſand deaths,
To ſend me hence without a kind Farewel.
Oed. Gods, how ſhe ſhakes me! ſtay thee, O *Jocaſta*,
Speak ſomething e're thou goeſt for ever from me.
Joc. 'Tis Womans weakneſs, that I would be pity'd;
Pardon me then, O greateſt, tho' moſt wretched,
Of all thy Kind: my Soul is on the brink,
And ſees the boiling Furnace juſt beneath:
Do not thou puſh me off, and I will go
With ſuch a willingneſs, as if that Heav'n
With all it's glories glow'd for my reception.
Oed. O, in my heart, I feel the pangs of Nature;
It works with kindneſs o're: Give, give me way;
I feel a melting here, a tenderneſs,
Too mighty for the anger of the Gods!
Direct me to thy knees, yet, oh forbear:
Leſt the dead Embers ſhould revive,
Stand off———and at juſt diſtance
Let me groan my horrours———here
On the Earth, here blow my utmoſt Gale;
Here ſob my Sorrows, till I burſt with ſighing.
Here gaſp and Languiſh out my wounded Soul.
Joc. In ſpight of all thoſe Crimes the cruel Gods
Can charge me with, I know my Innocence;
Know yours: 'tis Fate alone that makes us wretched,
For you are ſtill my Husband.
Oed. Swear I am,
And I'll believe thee; ſteal into thy Arms,

Renew

Renew endearments, think 'em no pollutions,
But chaſte as Spirits joys: gently I'll come,
Thus weeping blind, like dewy Night, upon thee,
And fold thee ſoftly in my Arms to ſlumber.

[*The Ghoſt of* Lajus *aſcends by degrees pointing at* Jocaſta.

Joc. Begon, my Lord! Alas, what are we doing?
Fly from my Arms! Whirl-winds, Seas, Continents,
And Worlds, divide us! O thrice happy thou,
Who haſt no uſe of eyes; for here's a ſight
Would turn the melting face of Mercy's ſelf
To a wild Fury.

Oed. Ha! what ſeeſt thou there?

Joc. The Spirit of my Husband! O the Gods!
How wan he looks!

Oed. Thou rav'ſt; thy Husband's here.

Joc. There, there he Mounts,
In circling fire, amongſt the bluſhing Clouds!
And ſee, he waves *Jocaſta* from the World!

Ghoſt. Jocaſta, Oedipus. [*Vaniſh with Thunder.*

Oed. What wouldſt thou have?
Thou know'ſt I cannot come to thee, detain'd
In darkneſs here, and kept from means of death.
I've heard a Spirit's force is wonderful;
At whoſe approach, when ſtarting from his Dungeon,
The Earth does ſhake, and the old Ocean groans,
Rocks are remov'd, and Tow'rs are Thundred down:
And walls of Braſs, and Gates of Adamant,
Are paſſable as Air, and fleet like Winds.

Joc. Was that a Raven's Croak or my Sons Voice?
No matter which; I'll to the Grave, and hide me:
Earth open, or I'll tear thy bowels up.
Hark! he goes on, and blabs the deed of Inceſt.

Oed. Strike then, Imperial Ghoſt; daſh all at once
This Houſe of Clay into a thouſand pieces:
That my poor lingring Soul may take her flight
To your Immortal Dwellings.

Joc. Haſte thee then,
Or I ſhall be before thee: See, thou canſt not ſee;
Then I will tell thee that my wings are on:
I'll mount, I'll fly, and with a port Divine
Glide all along the gaudy Milky ſoil,
To find my *Lajus* out; ask every God

In

In his bright Palace, if he knows my *Lajus*,
My murder'd *Lajus*!

Oed. Ha! how's this, *Jocasta*?
Nay, if thy brain be sick, then thou art happy.

Joc. Ha! will you not? shall I not find him out?
VVill you not show him? are my tears despis'd?
VVhy, then I'll Thunder, yes, *I* will be mad,
And fright you with my cries; yes, cruel Gods,
Tho' Vultures, Eagles, Dragons tear my heart,
I'll snatch Celestial flames, fire all your dwellings,
Melt down your golden Roofs, and make your doors
Of Crystal flye from off their Diamond Hinges;
Drive you all out from your Ambrosial Hives,
To swarm like Bees about the field of Heav'n:
This will *I* do, unless you shew me *Lajus*,
My dear, my Murder'd Lord. O *Lajus*! *Lajus*! *Lajus*!

[*Ex.* Jocasta.

Oed. Excellent grief! why, this is as it should be!
No Mourning can be suitable to Crimes
Like ours, but what Death makes, or Madness forms.
I could have wish'd methought for sight again,
To mark the gallantry of her distraction:
Her blazing Eyes darting the wandring Stars,
T'have seen her mouth the Heav'ns, and mate the Gods,
VVhile with her Thundring Voice she menac'd high,
And every Accent twang'd with smarting sorrow;
But what's all this to thee? thou, Coward, yet
Art living, canst not, wilt not find the Road
To the great Palace of magnificent Death;
Tho' thousand ways lead to his thousand doors,
VVhich day and night are still unbarr'd for all.

[*Clashing of Swords: Drums and Trumpets without.*

Hark! 'tis the noise of clashing Swords! the sound
Comes near: O, that a Battle would come o're me!
If I but grasp a Sword: or wrest a Dagger,
I'll make a ruine with the first that falls.

Enter Hæmon, *with Guards.*

Hæm. Seize him, and bear him to the VVestern-Tow'r.
Pardon me, sacred Sir; *I* am inform'd
That *Creon* has designs upon your life:

Forgive

Forgive me then, if, to preſerve you from him,
I order your Confinement.

Oed. Slaves, unhand me.
I think thou haſt a Sword: 'twas the wrong ſide.
Yet, cruel *Hæmon*, think not I will live;
He that could tear his eyes out, ſure can find
Some deſperate way to ſtifle this curſt breath:
Or if I ſtarve! but that's a lingring Fate;
Or if I leave my brains upon the wall!
The Aiery Soul can eaſily o're-ſhoot
Thoſe bounds with which thou ſtriv'ſt to pale her in:
Yes, I will Periſh in deſpite of thee;
And, by the rage that ſtirs me, if I meet thee
In the other World, I'll curſe thee for this uſage. [*Exit.*

Ham. Tireſias, after him; and, with your Counſel,
Adviſe him humbly; Charm, if poſſible,
Theſe feuds within: while I without extinguiſh,
Or periſh in th' Attempt, the Furious *Creon*;
That Brand which ſets our City in a Flame.

Tir. Heav'n proſper your intent, and give a period
To all your Plagues: what old *Tireſias* can
Shall ſtraight be done. Lead, *Manto* the Tow'r. [*Ex.* Tir. Manto.

Ham. Follow me all, and help to part this Fray, [*Trumpets again.*
Or fall together in the bloody broil. [*Ex.*

Enter Creon *with* Eurydice, Pyracmon *and his Party giving ground to* Adraſtus.

Cre. Hold, hold your Arms, *Adraſtus* Prince of *Argos*,
Hear, and behold; *Eurydice* is my Priſoner.

Adr. What would'ſt thou, Hell-hound?

Cre. See this brandiſh'd Dagger:
Forgo th' advantage which thy Arms have won,
Or, by the blood which trembles through the heart
Of her whom more than life I know thou lov'ſt,
I'll bury to the haft, in her fair Breaſt,
This Inſtrument of my Revenge.

Adr. Stay thee, damn'd wretch; hold, ſtop thy bloody hand.

Cre. Give order then, that on this inſtant now,
This moment, all thy Souldiers ſtraight disband.

Adr. Away my Friends, ſince Fate has ſo allotted;
Begon, and leave me to the Villain's mercy.

Eur. Ah, my *Adraſtus!* call 'em, call 'em back!
Stand there; come back! O, cruel barbarous Men!

Could you then leave your Lord, your Prince, your King,
After ſo bravely having fought his Cauſe,
To periſh by the hand of this baſe Villain?
Why rather ruſh you not at once together
All to his ruine? drag him through the Streets,
Hang his contagious Quarters on the Gates;
Nor let my death affright you.

Cre. Dye firſt thy ſelf then.

Adr. O, I charge thee hold.
Hence, from my preſence all: he's not my Friend
That diſobeys: See, art thou now appeas'd? [*Ex. Attendants.*
Or is there ought elſe yet remains to do
That can atone thee? ſlake thy thirſt of blood
With mine: but ſave, O ſave that innocent wretch.

Cre. Forego thy Sword, and yield thy ſelf my Priſoner.

Eur. Yet while there's any dawn of hope to ſave
Thy precious life, my dear *Adraſtus*,
What-e're thou doſt, deliver not thy Sword;
With that thou may'ſt get off, tho' odds oppoſe thee:
For me, O, fear not; no, he dares not touch me;
His horrid love will ſpare me. Keep thy Sword;
Leſt I be raviſh'd after thou art ſlain.

Adr. Inſtruct me, Gods! what ſhall *Adraſtus* do?

Cre. Do what thou wilt, when ſhe is dead: My Souldiers
With numbers will o're-pow'r thee. Is't thy wiſh
Eurydice ſhould fall before thee?

Adr. Traytor, no:
Better that thou and I, and all mankind
Should be no more.

Creon. Then caſt thy Sword away,
And yield thee to my mercy, or I ſtrike.

Adr. Hold thy rais'd Arm; give me a moment's pauſe.
My Father, when he bleſt me, gave me this;
My Son, ſaid he, let this be thy laſt refuge;
If thou forego'ſt it, miſery attends thee:
Yet Love now charms it from me; which in all
The hazards of my life *I* never loſt.
'Tis thine, my faithful Sword, my only truſt;
Tho' my heart tells me that the gift is Fatal.

Cre. Fatal! yes, fooliſh Love-ſick Prince, it ſhall:
Thy arrogance, thy ſcorn,
My wounds remembrance,
Turn all at once the fatal point upon thee.
Pyraemon, to the Palace, diſpatch

The

The King: hang *Hæmon* up, for he is Loyal,
And will oppoſe me: Come, Sir, are you ready?
Adr. Yes, Villain, for what ever thou canſt dare.
Eur. Hold, *Creon*, or through me, through me you wound.
Adr. Off, Madam, or we periſh both; behold
I'm not unarm'd, my Ponyard's in my hand:
Therefore away.
Eur. I'll guard your life with mine.
Cre. Dye both then; there is now no time for dallying.
[*Kills* Eurydice.
Eur. Ah, Prince, farewell; farewell, my dear *Adraſtus*. [*Dyes.*
Adr. Unheard of Monſter! eldeſt-born of Hell!
Down, to thy Primitive Flames. [*Stabs* Creon.
Cre. Help, Souldiers, help:
Revenge me.
Adr. More; yet more: a thouſand wounds!
I'll ſtamp thee ſtill, thus, to the gaping Furies.
[Adraſtus *falls, kill'd by the Souldiers.*

Enter Hæmon, *Guards, with* Alcander *and* Pyracmon *bound*: *the Aſſaſſins are driven off.*

O *Hæmon*, I am ſlain; nor need I name
The inhumane Author of all Villanies;
There he lyes gaſping.
Cre. If I muſt plunge in Flames,
Burn firſt my Arm; baſe Inſtrument, unfit
To act the dictates of my daring mind:
Burn, burn for ever, O weak Subſtitute
Of that, the God, Ambition. [*Dyes.*
Adr. She's gone; O deadly Marks-man, in the heart!
Yet in the pangs of death ſhe graſps my hand:
Her lips too tremble, as if ſhe would ſpeak
Her laſt Farewell. O, *Oedipus*, thy fall
Is great; and nobly now thou goeſt attended!
They talk of Heroes, and Celeſtial Beauties,
And wondrous pleaſures in the other World;
Let me but find her there, I ask no more. [*Dyes.*

Enter a Captain *to* Hæmon: *with* Tireſias *and* Manto.

Cap. O, Sir, the Queen *Jocaſta*, ſwift and wild,
As a robb'd Tygreſs bounding o're the Woods,

Has acted Murders that amaze Mankind:
In twisted Gold I saw her Daughters hang
On the Bed Royal; and her little Sons
Stabb'd through the breasts upon the bloody Pillows.
Hæm. Relentless Heav'ns! is then the Fate of *Lajus*
Never to be Aton'd? How sacred ought
Kings lives be held, when but the death of one
Demands an Empire's blood for Expiation?
But see! the furious mad *Jocasta*'s here.

Scene Draws, and discovers Jocasta *held by her Women, and stabb'd in many places of her bosom, her hair dishevel'd; her Children slain upon the Bed.*

Was ever such a sight of so much horrour,
And pity, brought to view!
Joc. Ah, cruel Women!
Will you not let me take my last farewell
Of those dear Babes? O let me run and seal
My melting Soul upon their bubling wounds!
I'll print upon their Coral mouths such Kisses,
As shall recall their wandring Spirits home.
Let me go, let me go, or I will tear you piece-meal.
Help, *Hæmon*, help:
Help *Oedipus*; help, Gods; *Jocasta* Dyes.

Enter Oedipus *above.*

Oed. I've found a Window, and I thank the Gods
'Tis quite unbarr'd: sure, by the distant noise,
The height will fit my Fatal purpose well.
Joc. What hoa, my *Oedipus*; see where he stands!
His groping Ghost is lodg'd upon a Tow'r,
Nor can it find the Road: Mount, mount, my soul;
I'll wrap thy shivering Spirit in Lambent Flames! and so we'll sail.
But see! we're landed on the happy Coast;
And all the Golden Strands are cover'd o're
With glorious Gods, that come to try our Cause:
Jove, *Jove*, whose Majesty now sinks me down,
He who himself burns in unlawful fires,
Shall judge, and shall acquit us. O, 'tis done;
'Tis fixt by Fate, upon Record Divine:
And *Oedipus* shall now be ever mine. [*Dyes.*
Oed. Speak, *Hæmon*; what has Fate been doing there?
What dreadful deed has mad *Jocasta* done?
Hæm. The Queen her self, and all your wretched Off-spring,
Are by her Fury slain.

Oed.

Oed. By all my woes,
She has out-done me, in Revenge and Murder;
And I should envy her the sad applause:
But, Oh! my Children! Oh, what have they done?
This was not like the mercy of the Heav'ns,
To set her madness on such Cruelty:
This stirs me more than all my sufferings,
And with my last breath I must call you Tyrants.

Hæm. What mean you, Sir?

Oed. Jocasta! lo, I come.
O *Lajus*, *Labdacus*, and all you Spirits
Of the *Cadmean* Race, prepare to meet me,
All weeping rang'd along the gloomy Shore:
Extend your Arms t' embrace me; for I come;
May all the Gods too from their Battlements
Behold and wonder at a Mortals daring;
And, when I knock the Goal of dreadful death,
Shout and applaud me with a clap of Thunder:
Once more, thus wing'd by horrid Fate, I come
Swift as a falling Meteor; lo, I flye,
And thus go downwards, to the darker Sky.

[*Thunder. He flings himself from the Window*: *The* Thebans *gather about his Body.*

Hæmon. O Prophet, *Oedipus* is now no more!
O curs'd Effect of the most deep Despair!

Tir. Cease your Complaints, and bear his body hence;
The dreadful sight will daunt the drooping *Thebans*,
Whom Heav'n decrees to raise with Peace and Glory:
Yet, by these terrible Examples warn'd,
The sacred Fury thus Alarms the World.
Let none, tho' ne're so Virtuous, Great, and High,
Be judg'd entirely blest before they Dye.

EPILOGUE

EPILOGUE.

WHAT Sophocles *could undertake alone,*
Our Poets found a Work for more than one;
And therefore Two lay tugging at the piece,
With all their force, to draw the pondrous Mass from Greece.
A weight that bent ev'n Seneca's *strong Muse,*
And which Corneille's *Shoulders did refuse.*
So hard it is th' Athenian *Harp to string!*
So much two Consuls yield to one just King.
Terrour and pity this whole Poem sway;
The mightiest Machines that can mount a Play;
How heavy will those Vulgar Souls be found,
Whom two such Engines cannot move from ground?
When Greece *and* Rome *have smil'd upon this Birth,*
You can but Damn for one poor spot of Earth:
And when your Children find your judgment such,
They'll scorn their Sires, and wish themselves born Dutch;
Each haughty Poet will infer with ease,
How much his Wit must under-write to please.
As some strong Churle would brandishing advance
The monumental Sword that conquer'd France;
So you, by judging this, your judgments teach
Thus far you like, that is, thus far you reach.

Since

Since then the Vote of full two Thousand years
Has Crown'd this Plot, and all the Dead are theirs;
Think it a Debt you pay, not Alms you give,
And in your own defence, let this Play live.
Think 'em not vain, when Sophocles *is shown,*
To praise his worth, they humbly doubt their own.
Yet as weak States each others pow'r assure,
Weak Poets by Conjunction are secure.
Their Treat is what your Pallats rellish most,
Charm! Song! and Show! a Murder, and a Ghost!
We know not what you can desire or hope,
To please you more, but burning of a Pope.

FINIS.